A NATION'S HERITAGE

H. D. RAWNSLEY

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A NATION'S HERITAGE

A NATION'S HERITAGE

BY

H. D. RAWNSLEY

Canon of Carlisle, Chaplain to the King

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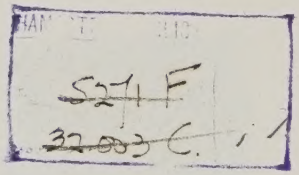

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DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY
OF THE FIRST DUKE OF WESTMINSTER,
OF MISS OCTAVIA HILL, AND OF SIR ROBERT HUNTER,
WITHOUT WHOSE HELP THE NATIONAL TRUST
FOR PLACES OF HISTORIC INTEREST AND
NATURAL BEAUTY WOULD NOT
EASILY HAVE COME
INTO BEING

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PREFATORY NOTE

THIS record of a summer tour to our National Trust possessions in the West of England has been made in the hope that it may interest and be of use to future visitors, and that it may serve to stimulate lovers of their country to acquire in future years, for the lasting benefit of the nation, other such delightful sites and scenes.

I am much indebted to my wife's assistance in preparing this simple chronicle, and to Mr. Hamer for his kindly help.

H. D. RAWNSLEY,
Hon. Secretary of the National Trust.

ALLAN BANK, GRASMERE,
June 1918.

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A Nation's Heritage

DINAS OLEU, BARMOUTH

THE traveller who would see Barmouth, or Bermo, as the old inhabitants still call it, an abbreviation of the word Aber-maw or mouth of the Mawddach, should visit it in the last week in May or first week in June.

The little grey town beneath the cliff is not yet overflowing with visitors, and he will not be troubled by litter on his visit to the famous Panorama Walk. Even if there were no interesting National Trust possession at the end of his journey he would be well repaid by the marvel of the landscape as he passes down the estuary from Dolgelly. Leaving Dolgelly station we may see Hengwrt in the woodland to the right, the home that for the latter part of her life was the retreat of that tireless worker, Miss Frances Power Cobbe. As the train stops at Penmaenpool we can view a square mile of sandy flat, covered with short sea grass and carpeted with myriads

of shell-pink thrift flowers. If the tide is flooding in, this same pink and green carpet is interlaced with glittering pools of water that seem as if some giant writer of hieroglyphs had been at work with blue paint. If the tide is out we shall find rainbow-coloured sands, en-isled by grey-blue water with herons standing like silver sickles in the sun, and companies of white gulls that jewel the fringes of the tideway. Elder flower is white in the woods, golden flags are bright in the marshy meadows, the wild roses fill the thickets with their fairy beauty.

The train stops at Arthog, whose woods slope upward to grey-green pastures and sunny sky. Again the level flats are carpeted with thrift ; another stop is made at a little junction, the train roars over the viaduct, which sprawls like a great millipede across the estuary mouth. This viaduct is not unknown in song, for Charles Tennyson Turner, the elder brother of the Laureate, who was on a visit to Barmouth at the time of its opening, chronicled the event in one of his exquisite sonnets.

We run in, right under the rocky cliff on which the town is built, and are astonished at the extraordinary wealth of dark red valerian which clothes the debris heaps, climbs the cliff ledges, and fills the little lodging-house gardens. We may be pardoned, as we pull up at the

station and note the ugliness of modern Barmouth, for wishing the sea had never retired, as it has retired, and given site for the erection of these rows of unlovely shops and lodging-houses. For in the days when the sea came right up to the main street, and when the river ran north as far as the railway station, Barmouth must have been one of the most beautiful fishing villages imaginable. The fishermen's cottages climbed up the face of the rock and perched themselves on what would seem such narrow ledges as would hardly enable them to find foothold. Steep steps, often cut in the rock itself, or narrow, twisty passages led from one rock to another. The cottages themselves, built of the grey rock on which they nestled, melted harmoniously into their background one on the top of another with entrances at different levels. The dwellers might seem doomed to the penance, as Pennant tells us, of seeing down the chimney of the subjacent neighbours.

But each had something else to look at. From no place on earth could these rough rock-dwellers have finer view of sea or sky, of glorious glimpse of the mountains, their changing lights and shadows, on either side of the broad estuary; from nowhere else could they behold such marvellous sunsets, from nowhere else better feel warm sunshine and sea-scented air. Picturesque

beyond words were and are those curious little eyries with the rock breaking out about them, into lichen crags overgrown with heather and gorse; snug even in days of storm, when the rain lashes the windows and howls down the chimneys, these cottages have ever clung bravely to the breast of the rock and have rarely suffered from the elements.

There is only one house in Barmouth of historic interest, and that is by the harbour quay, a house still called Ty-gwyn-yn, or the White House, Bermo, of which the rude and ancient doorway is proof of its antiquity. This old building is said to have been erected by Gruffydd Fychan of Cors-y-gedol, who gave shelter in it to Jasper Tudor, Earl of Pembroke, and to his ward, Henry Richmond, afterwards Henry VII, whilst they were planning the invasion of England some time between the years 1460 and 1485.

This is not the only note of antiquity, for the road that comes down the estuary from Dolgelly was probably built by the Romans, who made a chain of forts to guard it. The remains of one of these is still visible on the mountain side, in close proximity to a British fort near Llanbedwr.

The little Early-English church of Llanaber, the parish church of Barmouth, a mile north of

the town, contains within its walls an interesting sepulchral stone discovered in the sand between Barmouth and the church, upon which is the inscription, "Calixtus monedo Regis," which may mean "Calixtus, King of Mona," or "Calixtus, King of the Mountain."

The main feature of the immediate surroundings of the town is the gorse-clad steep of Dinas Oleu, with its sunburnt grasses contrasting with the vivid fern and rocky outcrop, and made beautiful on its lower slopes by witch-elms and long-limbed beeches, whose tall smooth trunks stand out white as the rocks shine white upon the cliff side.

Whether the cliff obtained its name from the whiteness of rock, or in olden days from some beacon which shone out at night-time to guide the fishermen to the haven, is unknown; but a "Fortress of Light" it is to all who, with heavy hearts in this dark and cloudy day of war, pass up by its many paths of access to the sunshine and the glory of the seascape as seen therefrom.

I do not know any cliff with such fellside beauty so easily accessible from a village town, and happy are the inhabitants who have this recreation ground sealed to their use for ever. Climb up the sloping path at the back of the Cors-y-gedol Hotel, and in five minutes you will be above the town and the happy shouts of

children below, while the murmur and scent of the "infinite sea" fill the air.

Unbeautiful as Barmouth itself is, at least from this height one must admit that the architect has added one object of great beauty to the scene in the building upon its terrace, deep-carved into the bosom of the hill, the church of St. John, with its grey stone tower and red sandstone coigns and window tracery—the one modern building that lends dignity to the neighbourhood, the gift of Mrs. Perrin.

Passing upward till we gain one of the main means of access to the famous Panorama Walk, we come upon the terraced gardens and high uplifted house of Tyn-y-fynnon, which seems to take us back to Italy as we look at its quaint steps and its architectural substructures. Here dwelt, till her death in 1917, Fannie Talbot, the mother of the remarkable artist Quartus Talbot, and gifted friend of John Ruskin, Frances Power Cobbe, and Francesca Alexander. With her wisdom she was the constant counsellor and friend of the Barmouth people, rich and poor; public spirited as she was generous, it was she who, in 1874, having learned of Mr. Ruskin's newly formed Guild of St. George, which he had set on foot in 1871, for the salvation of England, offered him twelve or thirteen of the cottages on the steep immediately below her

house. In a letter of acceptance, dated Herne Hill, 1874, Ruskin writes : " The ground and houses which you offer me are exactly the kind of property I most wish to obtain for St. George's company. I accept them at once with very glad thanks and will endeavour soon to come to see them and thank you and your son in person. No cottagers shall be disturbed, but in quiet and slow ways assisted as each may deserve or wish to better their own houses in sanitary and comfortable points. My principle is to work with the minutest possible touches but with steady end in view, and by developing as I can the energy of the people I want to help."

It was whilst I was staying in her hospitable house, in the year 1895, that Mrs. Talbot determined to present the cliff adjacent to her garden to the National Trust, and as it is the first property the National Trust ever received it is worth while telling the story of how it came about. I was in correspondence with Horne and Birkett, solicitors, who had sent me, at Sir Robert Hunter's request, the proposed articles of association of the Trust, which was then being formed. Mrs. Talbot had a natural love for law, and she desired to look through the papers. At the end she said : " I am so grateful for this chance, for I perceive your National Trust will be of the greatest use to me. I

have long wanted to secure to the public for ever the enjoyment of Dinas Oleu, but I wish to put it into the custody of some society that will never vulgarize it, or prevent wild Nature from having its own way; I have no objection to grassy paths or to stone seats in proper places, but I wish to avoid the abomination of asphalt paths and the cast-iron seats of serpent design which disfigure so largely our public parks, and it appears to me that your association has been born in the nick of time to be my friend. If your Trust will accept it, Dinas Oleu shall be yours so soon as lawyers can make arrangements."

As soon as the transfer to the Trust had been carried through, a rough panel giving the history of the transaction was carved upon a rock midway up the steep which runs as follows :

"The upper part of this cliff

Dinas Oleu

(The Fortress of Light)

Enclosed by the walls on the N.E.
And by the roadway from gate to gate on
The South and West, was in March 1895
Given by Mrs. C. T. Talbot of Tyn-y-ffynon to
The National Trust
for Places of Historic Interest
or Natural Beauty
To be kept and guarded for the enjoyment
of the people of Barmouth for ever."

The house of the donor, Tyn-y-ffynon, adjoins the National Trust property, and having right to wander into its garden ground we climbed from the little grass terrace ringed with fuschias and escalonia by intricate paths from ledge to ledge with tiny garden plots of flowers and vegetables carefully tended, up and up towards the ivy-grown crags and grey wall that bound the garden to the east.

In sheltered little hazel copses birds sang about their nests. Suddenly I was aware, in a hidden woodland recess which gave wide prospect of the grey sea, of a slab of rock overgrown with little Alpine pinks, on which was engraved under his name and the dates of his birth and death the following inscription :

Ci gît un Semeur qui
Sema jusqu'au tombeau
Le Vrai, le Bien, le Beau
avec idolatrie
À travers mille combats,
De la plume et des bras
Tels travaux en ce monde
ne se compensent pas.

And I knew that I was standing by the self-chosen grave of a friend of the late Mrs. Talbot, a philosopher and social reformer, who, driven into exile by the enmity of the French priests, had here found asylum. Known to all

the *literati* of France in his time, here he was honoured by the friendship of Dean Stanley and John Ruskin. A true follower of St. Francis here he tilled the little rocky ledges above his home and tamed the birds, cared for all wild flowers, and friend of all the people went in and out of their homes with active ministry of benevolence. He dwelt in one of the tiny cottages of the Guild of St. George, and it is remembered that Ruskin, in conversation with him, said : "These things which I am but now discovering and trying to teach, *you* knew and taught when I was a child."

The last time Ruskin saw him M. Guyard was ill, and the English Professor went up to his bedroom to bid him farewell. After some talk they parted, Ruskin affectionately bending down to kiss the French Reformer, so one in soul, so different in circumstance, and thus they parted, not to meet in this world again.

I mention M. Guyard's tomb because it speaks such volumes for the wide-minded outlook and generosity of the lady of Tyn-y-ffynon, who, herself a social reformer, first befriended Ruskin in his Guild of St. George and endowed the National Trust with its first possession.

From her garden gate we gained access to the wild ground above her home, all fern and foxglove, and were glad to think as we climbed

to the mountain top that our freedom of foot there was the direct result of the enjoyment the public had on Dinas Oleu. For when this property came into the market the Town Council of Barmouth purchased it to enable the people to have the same pleasure there as they had on the cliff slope below.

Thence we took an easy walk by a pleasant field path and road to the Panorama Walk, as it is called, and blessed are they who have such marvellous sight of mountain, sea and estuary as is therefrom obtained. The tide was turning and slowly making islands of the rainbow sands beneath, till rainbow sand became rainbow water-flood, and the irridescent water turned meandering rills to rivers, and slowly filled the estuary from shore to shore with silver light. I could not help remembering that Alfred Tennyson had once wandered here. Writing to Emily Selwood, who afterwards became his wife, in 1839, he says: "Barmouth is a good deal prettier place than Aberystwyth. With its flats and shore, a sea with breakers—looking Mablethorpelike [he never forgot the Lincolnshire coast]—and sand hills, and close behind them huge crags, and a long estuary with cloud-capped hills which range up as far as Dolgelly with Cader Idris on one side."

But I mention Tennyson in connection with

this Panorama Walk, because it was on a certain glorious evening after heavy rain that he described the sense of peace which entered his soul as he gazed towards the sunset and the sea. And in this time of war there is no finer medicine for the mind than to be able to stand above the Barmouth estuary on a Junetide evening, and feel the truth of the lines in *In Memoriam* that this scene inspired.

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
Thro' all the dewy tassell'd wood,
And shadowing down the horned flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy breath
Thro'out my frame, till Doubt and Death
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly.

We returned to Dinas Oleu, and after passing the inscribed rock for fifty yards or so, came to a rough stone recessed seat which, without being unsightly, gave shelter from the wind to those who sat there. We have reason to remember that seat. It was after school hours, and there was gathered there a group of children

as spectators of the dancing of one of their number, with ribbons cross-gartered on her bare legs and an ivy chaplet on her head. We asked who taught her to dance? And the children answered : " No one, but she has taught herself. She knows many dances."

" Dance for us, then," we said, and at once the child with most graceful gesture of arms and legs danced a song, which she called " The song of the flowers," singing as she danced some simple Welsh melody.

We noticed that above the seat was a slight receding terrace. Two other children wearing chaplets of flowers came up the steep path, and at once scrambled up to this terrace, and for a moment were hidden from view. When they emerged they had doffed their ragged petticoats and appeared with short skirts and bare legs. " That is our dressing-room," they explained ; and they pointed to a rude notice, scribbled with chalk upon a black board, with a Welsh disregard of gender, " He who goes up without leave will be sent home."

Four children joined hands and danced a pretty dance. Then a dark, handsome girl, selecting a smooth slab of stone, began a dance of the Scotch-reel type. Another child appeared with her hands full of foxgloves, which she distributed to the dancers who waved them as they

danced. "Sword flowers" they called them. We asked why, and they pulled the petals apart to show us the pistils, with their heads like little golden hatchets.

The sunlit sea came rolling in over golden sands to the beach, and the evening glow turned the cliff ledges of the "Fortress of Light" into shining silver. But the sense of sunshine of soul, which these little dancing children imparted to the whole scene made us feel that, when the sun dipped beneath the horizon and the whole land darkened towards the stars, this gift to the nation, with its memories of happy child life, would shine on still.

MINCHINHAMPTON COMMON

WE were standing with the Dean in the noble chapter-house in Gloucester Cathedral. "Here," said he, "the King and his counsellors decided upon the compilation of Domesday Book." "To-morrow," we said, "we are going to visit a property of the National Trust whose title-deeds reach right back to that book of Doom."

So on the morrow we set forth in a bitter north-east wind, trusting that the sun would yet assert itself, and passing by the Great Western Railway by Haresfield, Stonehouse, and Stroud, with the Frome river on one side of us and peeps of the Severn canal on the other, with sight of frequent mills and little village clusters on the hill-slopes above us, we arrived at Brimscombe. Leaving the train we crossed the little river, turned sharply to our right through a lush meadow, passed a hairpin factory, and so gained a road that, deep-hewn by centuries of travel and storm, led us up a long steep hill towards the tableland, two miles away, of

Minchinhampton, the "Enderby Flat" of *John Halifax*.

The sun refused to shine upon us, but in the deep trough of the roadway we were out of the wind, and we were interested by the beauty of the gnarled roots of the trees stretching weirdly down for soil and food, and cheered by the "Herb Robert" cranesbill which, together with little round-leaved cranesbill, glowed in scarlet tufts from the banks and grey stone walls we passed. We came to a place where three roads met, and for lack of sign-post had to go some way to the left to a cottage to inquire our way. The garden was gay with blue campanula, and we learned that we were on the wrong track and must retrace our steps and take the other road for the "Blue Boys."

In half a mile or more we reached what once was a famous coaching inn, and is now a substantial farmhouse, interesting for its mullioned windows and air of Elizabethan time. The farmer directed us to Tom Long's Post, gaining which we should be on the common, and could make our way to the Old Lodge Inn. We inquired the meaning of "Tom Long's Post." He murmured something about a highwayman, but added he was "too busy for history." So we made our way unsatisfied as far as "Tom Long" went, but gladdened with the sight of glorious

beech trees upon level sward, and sight, too, of the fine brown truncated tower of Minchinhampton church. We passed into the little brown town, with its ancient market house, its quaint roof, and many mullioned windows, and made our way to the church; learned that at one time it had boasted a steeple but this had fallen in a storm, saw at a glance that it had been savagely restored at the worst time, i.e. 1842, and much of its interest swept away for ever.

But it had had a great history. There was probably a church here in Saxon times, and the priest in Minchinhampton was mentioned in Domesday Book. Its altar was dedicated by Walter de Maidenstone in July, 1315. The restorers had destroyed much of the Norman work, and many old Norman windows. They had also destroyed all the fourteenth-century work and reduced the length of the chancel. It was only by the exertions of a Dr. Dalton, F.S.A., that the beautiful wheel window in the south transept was saved. In the recesses of the south wall of the transept we saw stone coffins, with recumbent figures upon them, of Sir Peter Delamere and his wife, the knight cross-legged, the lady with padded hair and wearing long pointed sleeves. These monuments were probably erected between 1292 and 1308. We

were told that the vengeance of heaven fell upon the Philistine restorers of the church, for the removal and careless reburial of many bodies at the time brought a kind of Black Death upon the village.

We have seldom seen anything more picturesque than the sexton's house adjacent to the well-kept churchyard of to-day, and we left Minchinhampton village with a sense not only of the beauty and comfort of its buildings, but of its ancient history : for through Minchinhampton, ages before the time of the Saxon priest, there had flowed the life and forcefulness of Rome. The great Roman military road that passed from Chester to Gloucester ran hither, and Vespasian, the future Emperor, who was then a lieutenant under Aulus Plautius, must have passed this way in command of his legion.

We made our way to Tom Long's Post, where seven roads meet, and felt ourselves at home at sight of the notice-board and byelaws of the National Trust, or so much of them as could be read, for wind and weather had played havoc with the printing. We were now upon a high tableland 1,600 feet above sea-level.

Here the greatness of this Minchinhampton plateau made itself felt. It seemed limitless as it was treeless, and we remembered that in the days it was taken from Goda and given by the

Norman Conqueror to Queen Matilda's Convent of the Holy Trinity at Caen, the March of Minchinhampton, as described in Domesday Book, included Rodborough, and extended to 4,940 acres, of which 3,488 were cultivated, 1,440 were woodland, and the rest pasture-land, spoken of as twenty meadows. A good deal of land must have gone out of cultivation since those days, for the common is now 500 acres in extent.

But it is doubtful if the full population on and about the existing common was given, for we learn from Domesday Book that there were then in the Minchinhampton Manor only 32 villeins or small farms, 10 bondmen and freemen, 10 servi or labourers, and one priest.

As we made our way on to this limitless expanse of breezy pasture-land, the sullen sun shone out, and I felt, as it were, transported to the great marsh of Lincolnshire, for herds of cattle were feeding here, there droves of horses were pasturing, their foals at their feet ; and just as in " the wide enormous marsh " the few farms that exist, were hidden in groves of trees against the wind and seemed dark islands of shadow in an emerald sea.

What a breezy upland it is ! Have the golfers at yonder " Old Lodge " ever played in more exhilarating air, or with wider prospect? People

ask where is Minchinhampton Common? We answer, this sparsely-wooded plateau of the Cotswolds stands 1,600 feet above sea-level, is bounded on the north by the little river Frome and the Golden valley up which our train brought us to-day; on the south it is bounded by Avening brook, on the east by the parish of Sapperton, and on the west by the parish of Rodborough.

By its height it dwarfs the girdle of hills by which it is surrounded, but it overlooks the valley of the Severn to the Welsh hills on one side, and on the other gives sight of the long range of the Wiltshire Downs. From a point near the reservoir the Crook of Severn and Hay Hill can be seen, and the Sugar Loaf hill by Abergavenny stands up distinct on a clear day.

Above our heads the lark sings; at our feet the close-cropped grass is redolent of thyme and golden with yellow rock-rose. It is to-day as peaceful a scene as could well be imagined. Yet if there were no war raging, we could not forget war. For as we left the Park, as it is called, the great beech-studded open pleasure-ground near Minchinhampton village, to make our way to Tom Long's Post, we noticed huge ramparts across the plain, which told us of "far-off things and battles long ago." We can dismiss the tradition that Alfred fought his battle of Ethendune here, but we cannot forget that

hereabout, in 628, Penda, King of Mercia, fought a bloody fight against his two rebellious sons, Cynegills and Cwichelm, and whether those ramparts we saw in mid-plain to the left of the long white road we came by, are burial mounds or defences against the foe, there they stand to-day as monuments of war in historic times.

But this Minchinhampton Common takes us back to prehistoric days. There are upon its outskirts remains of the pit dwellers of a vanished race. There are remarkable tumuli and monuments of neolithic man. One of these is the Long Stone, near Gatcombe Lodge entrance, which, when opened, showed a stone chamber in which a skeleton sat in the position his sorrowing friends had placed him long centuries ago. There is also in Gatcombe parish a good example of a crowned barrow—a barrow with a huge stone upon its summit, that used to stand upright, and was called "The Tingle Stone."

We make our way to the "Old Lodge," as the inn is called, that is, the rendezvous of the Minchinhampton Golf Club. It has an ancient history. Here of old probably stood the hunting lodge to which one of our royal Henrys used to come for hunting the deer in the great woodlands that then filled the valleys round Minchinhampton Common. The first mention of the existing old lodge is in a deed of conveyance

from Lord Windsor to Samuel Sheppard and his son, dated May 28, 1656. It was this same Sheppard who was probably the first planter of the Green Park, near Minchinhampton village, with beech and oak.

The latest visit of Royalty to this old inn was when Charles I, during the siege of Gloucester, on his way from Matson House to Oxford, rested here and played a game of bowls with members of his retinue on what was up to late times a famous bowling-geen in a yew-tree-circled garth close by the house. For his sake it is worth while going to see the bowling-green, and as one looks round upon the rough green and the somewhat dilapidated bowlers' shed, one can feel how heavy the hand of man is upon this ancient pleasure-ground. But golf-greens are kept in order, and old men and young men, who have come back wounded from the war, may both forget the sorrow of this Armageddon in the great stretch of breezy Minchinhampton Common.

That the club before the war was going strong is plain from the names of winners of champion cups, both of men and women, that are inscribed upon the walls since its institution in 1890. The garden of the golf-house shows signs of war-time, but careless of all the sorrow of this dark day the white single peonies blossom in beauty and in joy.

We rested in the little bar parlour and partook of such hospitality as war-time rations allowed us. Then walked back to Tom Long's Post, in order to reach Brimscombe Halt in time for the train to take us to Stroud.

We turned out of our way thither to visit what is known as Whitefield's Tump, Tump being, as I surmise, the modern English form of tumulus. It stands not far from the roadside to Gloucester, beyond the reservoir, and is just visible from the Club House. Writing in March 1743, Whitefield tells us: "I rode to Stroud and preached to about 12,000 people in Mr. G.'s field, and at about six in the evening to a like number on Hampton Common. After this went to Hampton and held a general Love-feast, and went to bed about midnight very cheerful and happy."

We had special interest in visiting the Tump to-day, for we had started out on our expedition from the Old Bell Inn at Gloucester, which was in former days the home of George Whitefield's father. The abominable mobbing and abuse of Whitefield and his friend, Mr. Adams, is a dark blot on the scutcheon of Minchinhampton, and Whitefield narrowly escaped the fate of his friend, who for preaching the Gospel was thrown into a stagnant skin-pit at the tannery, and dragged through the dirty

runnel and filth of noisome things, down the street.

But who can help at this distance of time admiring the spirit of the devout man who, after this savage treatment at the hands of the mob, quietly returned to his home, betook himself to prayer, and exhorted his friends to rejoice with him in suffering for the cause of the Gospel?

We made our way thence down the long white shining road through Burleigh into the Golden valley. We noticed the picturesqueness of the cottages built of the cream-coloured native stone, some roofed with thatch, the majority with tiles, which had weathered into red-brown. We were struck, too, with the apparent populousness of the whole vale. Villages climbed the heights, quarries shone in the sun; and the mills in the vale, all of them on a small scale, seemed not to detract from its beauty, but rather to strike a chord of industrial life that was being led under favourable conditions of sun and air and country surroundings.

Ere we descended to the Halt, we took a backward view of this wonderful common, and rejoiced to think that there had ever been in the past a sturdy determination on the part of the commoners to resist encroachment. In 1832 a court leet meeting resolved to send peremptory notice to all and sundry who had made such en-

croachments, and since that time many had been the regulations made for the preservation of the common. Finally, by deed dated April 7, 1913, Major Ricardo, the Lord of the March, relinquished all his rights over the common, and transferred them for the sum of £1,200 to the National Trust. The good of that transfer is already apparent in the fact that quarrying for stone upon the common has been stopped, and in future its preservation in pristine beauty is assured.

KYMIN HILL, MONMOUTH

THE swifts were screaming high in sunny air as we turned our backs on Gloucester for Monmouth and Kymin Hill. We passed through a land of orchards and rush-green corn to Ross, there changed trains, and soon found ourselves on the banks of the Wye en route for Symon's Yat. Wooded hills began to grow up on either side of us. The cresséd isles of snow-white water-crowfoot gave us the impression of winter snow in summer flood.

Arrived at the station of May Hill, we crossed the bridge to take a photograph of the Kymin, with the bridge in the foreground, then recrossed it. Haymakers were busy on one side of the road, and on the other side, beneath the shade of poplars, the sheep shearers were at work, not with the picturesque shears as we see them at clippings at the northern fellside farms, but with an unpicturesque and whizzing machine. We turned to the left up the main road for Coalford

and Gloucester, and in a couple of hundred yards began to ascend by a delightful hazel-bowered path which led to an open meadow, and thence turned steeply toward the Kymin Hill; a fine view was obtained from this meadow of the pink and white town, with its blue-grey roofs and single town spire beyond the gleaming Wye. Thence to the right we made our way up a good cart road, passing one or two cottages covered with roses, whose gardens were gay with valerian and pansies, missed the near path up the hill by reason of an entire lack of guide-posts, and eventually leaving the main cart track went through another woodland path till we regained the cart road which turned sharply to the left beneath the shadow of fine beech trees. We passed another house and eventually arrived at a gate through which we entered a wood, and again, more by luck than by direction, found a path which led steeply up to the white tower on the top of the Kymin, which stands in nine acres of ground purchased by the National Trust in 1902 for the sum of £300.

It was about three-quarters of an hour's slow climb from the town, with endless variety of view, and the surprise of the open grass plateau which we gained, with its wind-blown Scotch firs and its comely sycamores, well rewarded us for the ascent. From near the tower where

dwells the custodian, though we were somewhat troubled by the fact that seedling sycamores and badly grown oak trees shut out the main view, we were able to obtain at a small opening a fine panorama. Away to the north, beyond the town and beyond the wooded ridge called White Hill, we saw the blue Sugar Loaf of Abergavenny, and to the left, in the farthest distance, the long back of the Little Mountain. To the right of the Sugar Loaf was seen the Skerridge, or the "Hill rent in twain." Farther to the right, but nearer and just across the vale, was seen the Buck Holt woodland, and more to the right still the hill called Little Doward.

Tranquil as the panorama was, a note of war was sounded by the rose-pink newly-ploughed lands high upon the ridge of the Buck Holt hill. But we forgot the sound of war in the singing of the garden warbler and willow wren. Then we turned from the view and made our way to what looked like a summer-house, or walled enclosure, to the east, and there again the sound of "unhappy far-off things and battles long ago" asserted itself. For this summer-house was in memory, as the inscription tells us, of the glorious deeds of the British navy more than one hundred years ago. The inscription runs as follows :

"This naval Temple
was erected Aug. 1, 1800,
to perpetuate the names of those
noble admirals
who distinguished themselves by their
glorious victories for England
in the last and present wars
and is respectfully dedicated to
Her Grace the Duchess of Beaufort
daughter of
Admiral Boscawen."

The abominable habit of the scribblers who visit Kymin Hill have rendered the inscription almost illegible. One would have thought that we, who owe so much to our navy, should at any rate have been shamed into abstention from such desecration, and the sooner the scribblers' work is painted out the better. The summer-house roof which runs right round is in sad disrepair, and the seats have by horse-play been partially destroyed—not to the disadvantage of certain cattle that were thereby enabled to shelter from the sun. They, at least, were setting an example to humankind, for they were enjoying the cool and rest, and not doing indignities to their surroundings.

One could not help the hope that whatever else comes of this war, more care of this singularly interesting naval memorial will result. When one remembers the names that are on

the cornice that surmounts the roof, and that on the weather-boarding beneath the eaves there are inscribed the names and dates of the principal naval victories achieved by such heroic seamen as Nelson, Vincent, Boscawen, Thompson, Rodney, Hawke, Bridport, Mitchell, Keith, Hood, Howe, Duncan, Warren, Bell, and Cornwallis, one asks oneself if any more singularly appropriate memorial to our great captains and admirals was ever dedicated, or reared in a more suitable place ; for here this Naval Temple, as it is called, a very temple of the winds, stands up on the Kymin plateau with fair view on a clear day of eight counties, and no single man or woman, boy or girl from those eight counties who shall chance to visit this little summer-house, if only they know the history of the glorious naval past, but will be inspired and thankful for British courage and seamanship.

The little shrine is so dilapidated that it might be well worth while to consider the replacing of it more permanently, with its historic names in more durable material than painted wood, as a memorial, not only to these great sea captains, but to the brave seamen of Monmouthshire who have given their lives for their country in this present great war. But failing this, as soon as this war is over the National Trust and the Local Committee should, I think, take steps to renew

the names and to rebuild the wooden verandah. If at the same time the coppice wood near by is sufficiently thinned to allow of an outlook over the surrounding country-side, visitors would be able better to realize the scene as Nelson saw it, when, as we gather from the *Morning Chronicle* of August 26, 1802, a distinguished company, according to a promise given to the Mayor of Monmouth, assembled here to inspect the lately erected Naval Temple. We read that on that occasion the "Hero of the Nile, accompanied by Lord and Lady Hamilton, Dr. Nelson, and other friends on Wednesday sennight, after passing the day with Mr. Wells, set off in a carriage-and-four for Kymin pavilion, where they were received with enthusiasm and by a discharge of cannon, the military band playing the National Anthem, Rule Britannia, and other national and martial airs. After breakfasting in the banquetting room, they proceeded to the Naval Temple, which his Lordship surveyed with great attention, and then walked through Bealieu grove. When they had surveyed the delightful scene, with which they expressed the highest gratification, the whole party, to satisfy public curiosity, walked back to Monmouth, receiving as they passed the grateful applause of all ranks of people, who seemed to vie with each other in the ardour of their expression of joy."

The history of the Kymin Round House, in which Nelson banquetted that day, is as follows : At the end of the eighteenth century a small dining club was formed by the residents of Monmouth. They dined out of doors on summer evenings in some beautiful place in the neighbourhood. It chanced that on one evening, in the summer of 1793, they elected to meet for their dinner picnic on the summit of the Kymin, and so pleased were they with the place that they resolved to repeat their experience in the following week. This led to a weekly dinner there, and when the autumn drew on they decided to build on the Kymin height a permanent dining place. Accordingly the following year they raised a public subscription and erected the present round house, so planning the building that every window should command a view of some special natural picture. Six years later, in honour of Nelson and the British Navy, they built the Naval Temple hard by.

We descended to the roadway by a new route, which led us by several interesting little cottage dwellings, by narrow pathways through hazel thickets, to the bridge and town, visited the Shire Hall with its statue of Harry of Monmouth, whose victory of Agincourt is commemorated by the name of Agincourt Street, and were much interested in the striking bronze statue to one

ROUND HOUSE, KYMIN HILL.

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of our first aviators, Rolls, who stands before the hall clad in airman's suit, and holding a model of an aeroplane in his hand. Thence we proceeded to the beautiful thirteenth-century bridge over the Monnow, with its picturesque fortress-gateway and the little Norman church and exquisite market cross at the farther end of the bridge. We returned by a short cut to the station through the cattle market, over a wide meadow, a veritable field of the cloth of gold on account of its dandelions, and before reaching the bridge over the Wye, that beneath a cloudless sky ran a stream of cobalt-blue dappled with white islands of water-crowfoot, we paused to watch some parent swans and their cygnets beside their nest on one of these islets of milk-white blossom in mid stream ; and so giving a last long look to the Kymin Hill, with thanks to the National Trust for having secured that magnificent view-point, we took train and returned to Gloucester.

WESTBURY COLLEGE

ON the left bank of the little River Trym, whose waters are now for the most part hidden in a culvert beneath the main street of the village of Westbury, stand the remains of one of the most interesting foundations in the West of England, a Benedictine Priory that afterwards became a college of Augustinian Canons.

Before Bristol was, Westbury College existed. More than a thousand years ago, the site of Westbury College is mentioned in MSS. still extant. Offa, the King of the Mercians, gave the land on which the monastery was afterwards built, in the year 797, and in the year 803 it was a well-endowed monastery under the Abbot Freothomund.

It was probably the centre, whether as a house of old English priests or as a Benedictine monastery, from which monasticism spread through Mercia and East Anglia. All that now remains is the rectangular battlemented gate-house, with beautiful ribbed vaulting—bearing

Bishop Carpenter's arms on one of the bosses in its lowest chamber; with a circular stairway which formerly gave access to a chamber on each of the three stories and which now leads to the roof at the top, where still remains the ancient though undated bell. In addition there still exist two cupolaed corner towers, the one at the east angle, the other at the south-east, and the enclosing wall to the south by the side of the Trym.

It is more than probable that the burning down of the village by Prince Rupert, when on Monday, July 24, 1643, he went on his way to Bristol, was the result of his realizing that with the important towers and ramparts this Westbury College might be made a stronghold by the Parliamentary forces. It was in ruins in 1680, and was in the possession between 1676 and 1697 of a Mr. Lane, and thereafter passed through various hands, including those of Byron's friend, John Carr Hobhouse. The gate-tower probably owes its preservation to the fact that its basement and the adjacent room were used in later times as a blacksmith's shop.

Standing upon the tower roof, we look across the village street, above the red roofs of cottages, to the venerable minster of the college, now the parish church—a church which existed for more than three hundred years before the history of any other church in the neighbourhood begins,

and more than seven centuries before Bristol possessed a cathedral of its own.

It is probable that the original building of the ninth century was of wood, and though almost certainly rebuilt in Norman times, no trace of this church remains to us. It was reconstructed in the fifteenth century, and the college was then built on the four sides of an oblong court or cloister, partially surrounded by strong walls and towers, and partially protected by the River Trym, which on two sides formed a moat.

The great Bristol merchant, William Canynges, describes himself as Clerk, Dean of the Collegiate Church and College of the Holy Trinity of Westbury upon Trym. He left money for a Mass to be said in the minster church of Westbury, and for conducting his body afterwards to the church at Redcliff for burial by the altar of St. Catherine.[1]

Westbury, sometimes called Westminster, was an important ecclesiastical centre in the ninth century, when the outlying hollow, which afterwards became Bristol, was an uninhabitable swamp. John Carpenter, whose body rests in the chancel of the church, was one of the Bishops of Worcester who often presided here in person, for by Ethelric's bequest this monastery, at that

[1] Cf. *Saturday Review*, No. 1223, p. 427, April 5, 1879, for good account of Westbury, by Mr. Taylor.

time half secular, and a retreat for women and priests and warriors, came into the possession of the see of Worcester.

The signature of Oswald, the reformer, as Bishop, first occurs in the year 961, and he planted a colony of twelve monks from Fleury, in this sequestered valley, with a certain Germanus, mature in wisdom, though young in years, to be its head, and hither Oswald often came for rest and refreshment of soul.

So delighted was Edgar the King with the example of the devout community here under Germanus and Ednoth, who was praepositor of the household, and afterwards Bishop of Dorchester, that he directed forty-seven monasteries to be constituted after the same type. At Oswald's death the monastery fell into decay, and was devastated, we are told, by "perverse and piratical sons of the Devil." Wulstan, second Bishop of Worcester, restored the monastery in 1093. Samson the Norman, who was consecrated by Anselm at St. Paul's as Bishop of Worcester in 1096, deposed the monks of Westbury, and filled their places with seculars; but Theulf, the next Bishop, ejected the married clerks, and restored the Benedictine regulars. Edward I, June 10, 1290, was present at a trial of the Bishop of Worcester, who wished to annex the best livings in his diocese to the

convent. The end of it was that the monks were left in possession of Westbury for a time, but the Bishop eventually gained his point, and the monastery became a college, with Dean and Canons, and so continued to the Dissolution.

Bishop Carpenter rebuilt and enlarged the fabric, and surrounded it with a turreted wall in the manner of a castle. He died in 1476 at Worcester, and was buried on the south side of the high altar in the minster church of Westbury. A curious fresco was discovered some years ago near the place of his entombment in the crypt, representing his funeral procession from Worcester to Westbury. It is worth while to remember that John Wycliff was a Canon of Westbury College in 1375.

At the Dissolution, the manor of Westbury, including the college grounds, was granted to Sir Ralph Sadler. It was he who removed in troublous times the charters, writings and muniments of the college to Standon. Many of these are undiscovered, but two are in good preservation, the letters patent of Henry VIII and Edward VI, and are in the safe keeping of Lady Smyth of Ashton Court.

Standing on this fifteenth-century gate-house roof, a book of very ancient history is open before us. We can see Offa, the King of the Mercians, in consultation with his friend Abbot

WESTBURY COLLEGE GATE-HOUSE.

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Freothomund about the building of the monastery in the year 797.

We can, in fancy, behold Germanus, mature in wisdom, though young in years, with his twelve monks of Fleury at his side, giving welcome at the monastery gate to Bishop Oswald, the reformer, in the year 961. Edgar the King, as a visitor here, is so impressed with the devotion of the community, that ere he leaves the village he is determined that other monasteries of the same type shall be built throughout the kingdom. We can see the Benedictine monks driven from their beloved home by Samson, Bishop of Worcester, in 1096, to make way for seculars, and brought back again with great joy in their hearts by Theulf, the succeeding Bishop.

But as we gaze down upon the village church from our position of vantage, we are most impressed by the two funeral scenes which come before us. One is the dust-stained procession of pilgrim mourners who have come all the way from Worcester to bear the body of their friend Bishop Carpenter, the builder of this gate-house tower, to his last resting-place in the parish church. The other is the funeral that is leaving the church accompanied not only by the inhabitants of the village but by the leading merchants of Bristol as escort, to show honour to the Dean of Westbury, the master-merchant

of Bristol, William Canynges, whose body is to be borne with all pomp and circumstance to the beautiful church of St. Mary Redcliff, beside the Avon, in the city of which he was so great a benefactor.

As we dream of the past, we feel we owe a debt of gratitude to the Local Trustees, who in 1892 acquired this gate-house and took steps to have it made weather-proof, and who handed it over in the year 1907 to the National Trust.

THE LEIGH WOODS

EVERYONE has heard of the famous Nightingale Valley, and the Leigh woods above the Avon, that lie just across the Suspension Bridge opposite Clifton down. The nightingales, since the war began, have deserted their ancient haunt, but the memory of their song, as I heard it forty years ago, was in my ears as I crossed the bridge on a bright June day to be welcomed by a member of the Leigh Woods Committee, who gave me in charge of the ranger, and bade him show me all those eighty acres of woodland paradise, of sunny glade and shady path, of present beauty and past history, which are henceforth the permanent possession of the people.

The history of the acquisition of this pleasaunce is worth recording. It chanced that the owner of Burwalls, the house within the walls or rampart of the ancient Burrow camp, closely adjacent to the Suspension Bridge, was the chairman of the Leigh Woods Trust Committee. He found that most of the land available for building, on the west of the main road through the woodland, was quickly taken up, and there were so many inquiries for sites on the east of the road, that dominates the slopes to the River Avon, that

unless this wood could be bought up at once for the use of the public, there would soon be no more wander-ground for the people in the vicinity; and so with admirable foresight and generosity Mr. George Wills purchased the whole remaining eighty acres, which contain within them the famous Stokesleigh camp, and under conditions of management by a local committee, presented it to the National Trust.

His kindness did not stop there. He gave an endowment to meet the annual expenses of the upkeep, built a model rest-house and shelter, combined with a cottage for the ranger, with facility for visitors to obtain hot water for their teapots, a fountain of cold water for children, and possibility of escape from bad weather for people overtaken by rainstorms.

His committee went to work with a will to see that certain glades were opened up, and that certain tree planting should at once be done. At least 1,200 of such trees indigenous to the neighbourhood have already been planted. It is true that a good deal remains to be done in clearing undergrowth, and cutting out useless trees to give a chance of sun and air to others, but the committee's motto is, "Go slowly."

I walked on with the ranger over half a mile of curving main road, stopping from time to time to look down into the fascinating depths of Nightingale Valley that sloped, a verdurous

ravine, towards the Avon. The happy voices of children came up to me from far below. We entered the main woodland path beyond the Nightingale Valley, and heard, as we passed through welcome shadow, the song of the garden warbler and chaffinch, the wood wren and willow wren, and occasionally the mild, mellow " crush " of the woodpigeon's note, which was jarred by the screaming of the jay.

We came to a large open glade of short grass, and noticed that rough tree trunks had been sawn into suitable lengths, and placed in position between picturesque clumps of birch trees for seats. Several groups of people were sitting in clusters at their tea beneath the shade. The ranger took me to his cottage, which commands a full view of the glade, and showed me with no little pride the kitchen garden he had redeemed from the wilderness, showed me also the ample verandah, with its friendly clock face, and spoke of the litter nuisance which caused him, as it causes all lovers of recreation grounds, considerable trouble.

" I was at work," said he, " from six till twelve last Sunday morning, cleaning up after Saturday's holiday."

We fell to talk about this litter curse. He agreed with me that the only hope for a better mind and practice in these matters is to enlist the sympathy of schoolmaster and schoolmistress

in the elementary and secondary schools, and thus get a healthy public opinion against the selfishness of litter-making nursed amongst the scholars of the rising generation. I mentioned that in Cumberland we had, through the education authority, sent a leaflet on this subject to all schools, which I knew had in many instances been used by the teachers, with good effect, as the text for a talk against litter-making.

We turned to the more difficult question of flower-picking. He naïvely said: "Well, I don't hold with rooting up plants, for that is a shameful, silly thing to do, but flower-picking is in a child's blood, and nothing will stop it—at least that's my way of thinking about it," and I was compelled to agree with him.

But I learned that Leigh woods had suffered, as other possessions of the National Trust have suffered, by what I dare to call the crime of thievish up-rooting of flowers for private possession, and we agreed that if an offender was caught red-handed, only a police court summons and a fine would serve as a deterrent.

We walked forward by a well-defined pathway, till we reached the first of the three ramparts that in early British times were raised to defend the holders of Stokesleigh camp against the enemy. What a "strength" this great camp must have been, when, to prevent the crossing of the ford of the Avon at low-tide, this encamp-

LEIGH WOODS.

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ment acted in concert with the Burrow walls camp to safeguard the whole country, this side the river, from invasion.

Much clearing had been done, but I could not help the wish that more might be accomplished, so as to open up to public view the mighty triple ramparts of the camp. We proceeded then to an open glade on the edge of the cliff above the Avon, and gained therefrom a superb view of the river and the opposite cliffs, gorgeous in red and yellow and white rock, with patches of verdure here and there upon their rugged fronts; and we dreamed of the days when Sebastian Cabot with his Bristol and Bridgwater crew, in the year 1497, sailed down the river below us on his great voyage of discovery, while people from the cliff edge of the down, waved him their farewells and breathed their prayers for his safe return.

As we looked across to the city we saw, rose-red in the light from the west, a stately tower, that told us that Cabot's memory was still fresh in mind. Thence, returning by a circuitous route, we examined some of the ancient wall, which possibly Roman soldiers at a later time had made to strengthen the British camp they occupied, and noted the sketch plan upon a tree hard by, which had been carefully prepared to give the visitor information.

We passed homeward towards the glade we had first entered, through a remarkable birch-

tree grove, which by judicious thinning had been opened up to reveal its beauty. So with farewell to our guide we went back to the town well content.

Next day it was our privilege to wander over the same ground with the donor, and, as often happens, a second visit more than ever impressed us with the wild beauty and delight of this national possession.

It was evident from what he said that the local committee was determined to keep the woodland in a natural state. Never to plant foreign trees, but to add from time to time to its beauty by the planting of guelder-rose, wild cherry, rowans, and such flowering trees as were indigenous. I had heard of the small-leaved lime as being in existence there, but I found no example of it.

It was a great gain to have had a talk with this kindly man, whose large-hearted generosity had endowed Bristol and Clifton with such a recreation ground, and we came away fervently wishing that all who have it in their power to add thus to the health and real wealth of Merrie England, would follow a good example.

NOTE.—Since this was written, Mr. P. Napier Miles, of King's Weston, has presented to the Trust ninety acres of his beautiful park, including a golf course, at Shirehampton, overlooking the river Avon. Visitors to Bristol should make a point of seeing this.

TOR HILL, WELLS

WITHIN half a mile of the market-place of Wells, to the south-east of the Cathedral and Bishop's Palace, rises a wooded hill, through which a steep path passes upward to a level plateau of grass surrounded by trees—the beginning of an upland ridge on which is situated the Wells golf course. There is probably no more frequented track to high ground near the city than this woodland, but till the National Trust obtained possession of the wood and the grassy plateau above it the public had no right of access, or leave to wander, and though there is a large recreation ground by the side of the Bishop's barn, there was no place to which people could go for a quiet ramble, and to obtain a glorious view of the surrounding country. In 1914 these nineteen and a half acres of wood and grass land were purchased for £500, mainly contributed by residents in the locality.

Leaving the market-place, with its interesting well, the gift of Bishop Beckington in the middle

of the fifteenth century, we pass under his noble gateway, and keeping the Bishop's Palace moat on our left hand, turn with it under the lime-tree avenue along two sides of the moat, the legacy of Ralph of Shrewbury, 1340, beautiful to-day with its flotilla of white swans and grey cygnets, and vocal with the chirrick of the coot. At the extreme end of the second side of the moat, we cross the road which leads to Shepton Mallet, into an adjacent lane, then get over a stone stile in a wall on our right hand and climb the pathway.

At first we are disappointed by all view of the Cathedral being shut out by tree growth, but we notice numberless tracks which all tend steeply upward through the wood, and led by this sign we eventually come to a seat, high-perched on a platform of concrete, which gives a full view of the Cathedral.

It is impossible as we sit, with this grand pile of buildings before us, not to recall the historic past. Here it is probable that Ina, King of Wessex, was first attracted to found a home for his seculars by the wells of St. Andrew ; hither certainly came Eadward the Elder, the warrior son of Alfred the Great, after the peace of Wedmore, when the diocese of Sherborne was divided and the *Sumor-saetas* had a Bishop of their own, and determined that here the Bishop

should have his stool, and here probably built a little pre-Norman church at the beginning of the tenth century. It is pretty certain that Aethelm, a Glastonbury monk, who lived between 904 and 914, was the first Bishop. It was not till 1138 that Robert of Lewes, first Bishop of Bath and Wells, began his Norman Church on a larger scale. Of that church nothing now remains but the font in the Cathedral.

The magnificent pile which stands up before us now, was largely the work of Reginald de Bohun, 1174 to 1191; of Jocelin, the signer of Magna Charta; of William Bittern; of Robert Barnett, 1275; of William de Marcia, who completed Bittern's chapter-house walls; of Dean Godelee, who in 1319 finished the chapter-house and began the Lady chapel; of Bishop Ralph of Shrewsbury, who finished the Bishop's Palace begun by Jocelin, and who rebuilt the central tower, 1329–1363; of Bishop Harewell, died 1326, who was responsible for the south-western tower; of Bishop Budworth, who finished the north-western tower; Bishop Beckington, who recast the Vicar's close, and gave the city its beautiful gates, and Dean Grimthorpe, who built the Deanery.

But others should be remembered here. William Laud may have climbed this hill, and Thomas Ken, most brave and most holy of

Bishops, may have wandered in this woodland. If the spirits of the great dead could return to walk the meadows or wander on Tor Hill, there are none who would more gladly return than those two brothers, who loved their native place as they loved their life, Jocelyn and his brother Hugh, who afterwards became Bishop of Lincoln. These men gave of their love and of their substance, to the making beautiful the great house of God beside the seven wells.

As we look down on the splendid work of these builders of old time, we cannot help the feeling that some special Providence has guarded St. Andrew's Wells, and brought it about that the Psalmist's prayer should be answered : " Prosper thou the work of our hands upon us, O prosper thou our handiwork."

Through this opening in the wood, framed magnificently for us by the ruddy stems of some Scotch firs, we gain an unforgettable view of the stately Cathedral and conventual buildings. It is much to be hoped that in future years a proper path, instead of this multiplication of scramblers' tracks, will be made to this viewpoint ; otherwise considerable damage will be done to the wood itself, and the public will find it increasingly difficult to obtain foothold as they pass upward.

Rejoining the main path by which we enter

the wood, we come at last to the plateau, of which the tenant, to prevent his sheep straying, appears to have ignored the need of access to the upland from the wood, and has incontinently placed a stout post in the gap between the original stone stile and the wooden fence. We surmounted the obstacle, found ourselves in a breezy meadow of short-cropped grass, yellow rock roses everywhere covering the ground, and made our way to the single bench that is placed in mid field for the comfort of visitors. Therefrom, though the whole of the town and Cathedral was hidden from view by the fringe of trees, to the westward the magnificent tower of St. Cuthbert's church was seen to stand up nobly in middle distance. On our right hand the wooded Pen Hill led the eye along from east to west. Far off in the north was seen the blue-grey hill of Brent Knoll, and coming south our eyes rested for a moment on Hay Hill, then were carried west to the blue Quantocks, and ranging farther south, were for the moment riveted by the conical height, with its dark tower, of the Glastonbury Tor. The loveliness of that vale of Avalon was accentuated to-day by the many shadows and flying sunlight upon the fertile plain, and memories of that ancient home of sacred and Arthurian legend crowded upon us.

We made our way home through a breach

in the boundary wall in the wood, and hoped that in time to come a proper pathway through this upper part of the wood might be formed, to lead us through the dog-mercury-covered ground and the glittering woodland, back to the shining moat and the city of St. Andrew's Wells.

THE CHEDDAR GORGE

ON a cool day in mid June, in which sunshine followed sharp bursts of rain and cloud-shadows moved over the Cheddar vale and gave a sense of restlessness to the whole landscape, we left the little cathedral town by the wells of St. Andrew, a sanctuary of historic association and repose and could not help recalling the lines in which Wordsworth summed up his impressions of Grasmere—

> Made for itself and happy in itself,
> Perfect contentment, Unity entire.

We bade adieu to Jocelyn and Reginald's masterpiece, adieu to the most magnificent Gothic church tower in the west country, that of St. Cuthbert's, and took train for the Cheddar gorge.

We passed through an undulating country filled with corn, grass, and orchards—alas! for the most part this year fruitless—by railway cuttings, red with valerian or white with ox-eye daisies, passed two or three villages, whose yellow-washed walls and red-brown roof tiles gave a

sense of comfort and happiness to the scene, much regretting that these warm tiles were gradually giving way to blue slate, and found ourselves speeding past Wookey and its paper mills, Lodge Hill without a village, Draycott, whose elder blossom and wild rose were in full bloom, and saw shining whitely under the hill, near the entrance of the gorge, Paris Tower, as it is called, and knew that Cheddar station was near.

A pleasant walk of ten minutes took us to the heart of the little village and its magnificent fourteenth-century church tower, with the Annunciation beneath two canopies on its western side, and its St. Andrew high uplifted in canopy on its eastern face. Then, after pausing for a moment at the market cross, the lower part of whose shaft and stone steps is roofed in by an octagonal building of stone, we turned to the left and went northward through the picturesque village, till we heard the water singing beside us, and knew that it was not improbable that this little singer had in ancient times been the giant power that had cleft the Cheddar cliffs and made it possible for man to-day to pass slowly through the lime-stone precipices to the upland beyond.

As we neared the entrance to the gorge our minds were distressed beyond measure by the advertisements advocating visits to the rival caves.

Cox was clearly the man who held the key to stalactite secrets. Gough was the man who kept in his cavern-treasury echoes of 80,000 years ago, and the skull and bones of a prehistoric troglodite. To judge by photographs of the skull of the old cave-dweller, dentists were not needed in those days. It was a great relief to turn from this touting for custom to the beautiful sheet of water, the sound of whose fall at the weir into the garden of the Cliff hostelry filled the air, but whose shining surface, here and there white with water-crowfoot, gave back so much of reflection of white cloud and garden beauty as to rebuke us by its generosity, its motto clearly being "To give is better than to get."

This sheet of water, with its garden ground, its poplar trees, and its cottages, each bowered in roses or gay with "bridal wreath," is the picturesque feature of the entrance to the gorge, and when we see how badly treated it has been by the throwing into it of potsherds and broken china, we cannot but fear that in a few years' time its beauty will be entirely lost to inhabitants and visitors by being enclosed with some huge protective wall, for the Bristol Water Company has lately obtained power over it by Act of Parliament by a purchase not only of the water-pool, but of the Cliff Hotel and its grounds close by; and though they agreed not to take water

from this emergency source if less than three million gallons of water are passing down to the village, they probably have also obtained powers to protect by any means they choose their fountain head, with certain loss to the amenity of the approach to the gorge.

High up above the cottages, on the left hand as we neared the gateway of the gorge, lay couchant the huge lion-rock. The beauty of tree growth on the right hand, filled with the song of the willow warbler, the fresh green leafage in contrast with the grey cliff behind was delightful, and it was with real sense of relief we found ourselves away from all the busy life of the village, in the calm tranquillity of the great precipices high above us.

The jackdaws, it is true, clamoured from the clefts, but no other sound broke the silence, which seemed to grow as we passed upward, and we were soon opposite the debris heaps that mark the work of the steam stone-breaker, that as late as 1912 was doing its best, in the interests of road metal contracts, to destroy the beauty of the northern cliff at this point. We could not help contrasting the peace and quiet of to-day with the clatter and clang of the quarry that distressed us when we last visited the gorge.

The work of a week or two on these spoil heaps would, if the terrace slope was sown down

with grass, heal the wound the quarrymen have left behind them. At the end of the war this might be possible, and if valerian seed were scattered amongst the broken rocks hard by, all trace of the mischief of man would be obliterated.

The history of the acquisition of seventy acres of these Cheddar cliffs, including the quarry, which were purchased in 1909 for the sum of £1,100, raised by public subscription, is as follows. By reason of the quarrying which was going forward to the destruction of the beauty of the cliffs at this point a circular letter was addressed by the National Trust to the public authorities in the locality. The Somersetshire County Council showed its sympathy by passing a resolution regretting the damage done, and urging the importance in the national interest of preserving the unique beauty of the gorge as far as possible. Other public bodies, including the Cheddar Parish Council, followed suit, but it was not until 1908 that an opportunity arose of buying the property on which the chief quarry was situated. The National Trust then put themselves in communication with Mr. Walter Long, who owns the higher portion of the gorge on the same side, and they also wrote to Lord Bath, who is the owner of the high crags on the opposite side of the gorge, and obtained from both of them a friendly hearing. Without pledging

themselves for the future to refuse quarrying elsewhere, they intimated that they did not contemplate opening quarries on any part of the gorge which they owned, and encouraged by this correspondence the National Trust set to work to obtain the requisite money for the purchase. Large contracts for stone had been entered into which could not be broken, but it was arranged that these should be fulfilled from loose stones already fallen, and no further blasting was allowed to take place. These contracts ended in 1912.

We walked up the gorge, and felt its grandeur grow upon us. Not since we visited the back side of the Monte dei Fiori at Varese, had we seen such limestone buttresses and pinnacles as we saw below the Winding Rock and the Castle Rocks at Cheddar. The beauty of the bastion cliffs was enhanced by the fact that both Winding Rock and pinnacles are set in a curve which gives the most extraordinary play of light and shadow. Tier upon tier the mighty bastions rise, clothed here with ivy, there plumed with the foliage of ash and seedling birch, and wherever turf could obtain a foothold it jewelled the great castle-keeps with inset of emerald. Solemnly silent and stern at the base, their upper parapets were filled with the sound of daws; and the wings of ravens, as they sailed out

poised in mid-air, sent down their tiny dappling shadows.

Quite the most remarkable point of view in the whole walk was when, suddenly turning a corner, the pinnacles, like miniature Aiguilles Dru, rose out of velvet-dark shadow into blazing sunlight. By easy gradient and on a perfect roadway we walked still farther up the gorge, and now the sternness of the pass gave way to hanging woods on the one side, and grassy fell-side pasture on the other, that went by easy slope to blue heaven, and was dotted here and there by hazel and thorn-tree growth. We recognized at once the difference of altitude by the fact that thorn trees long out of flower in the valley were still blossoming here.

We had virtually reached the summit of the pass, when we noticed a gap in the wall that had once been a gateway, which gave access on the right hand, by a very steep path, to the heart of a pine wood, and feeling sure if we could pass through that wood and gain open country at the top we should obtain a magnificent panoramic view of the Cheddar valley and seaward plain, we clomb up through a wood that in the wind was full of the sound of the sea, and in twenty minutes reached the open country beyond.

Away to the south-west stood up the conical

hill with its tower of Glastonbury Tor, the plain of corn and grass rolled into the blue-grey distance of the Quantock hills. But for magnificent bursts of rain we should have seen the Bristol Channel. The plateau inland on both sides of the gorge, dotted here and there with single farm buildings, showed that the plough in this time of war had been busy in unexpected places. Back through the wood into the gorge, from cold wind into sunny quiet we came; so downward, the wonder of the cliffs growing all the way, we descended to the village, and as we passed the silent quarry we could not help being thankful that the National Trust had been enabled to prevent threatened destruction by the stone-getters, and that Lord Bath, who was the owner of the cliffs on the mountain side of the gorge, had consented to refuse permission for quarrying, and so was the protector of the noble gorge for all who should ever visit it.

We had some time on our hands before the train left and were enabled to visit the stalactite cavern. The slowness of the growth of the stalactites was instanced by the fact that one stalactite, which eighty years ago was not more than one-eighth of an inch from joining itself to the stalagmite that was meeting it from below, had not yet joined up; and the second impres-

sion we came away with was the beauty of the variety of colour of the stalactites, some leaden black, some rust-red, others veined with blue, others in close proximity purest white.

Time was also allowed us to visit the very interesting parish church. The beauty of some of the stone and wood carving, and ancient fourteenth-century glass, the Jacobean font cover, and the Jacobean altar table in a side chapel were worth remembering, and with a farewell look at the village cross, we turned our backs upon a characteristic Somersetshire village.

MUCHELNEY AND BARRINGTON COURT

THE war had made it almost impossible for us to see Muchelney and Barrington Court by railway, and as we were not going merely for our own pleasure but on business in connection with the National Trust, and must get to Langport station for Bridgwater, we took car from Wells for a cross-country journey.

We went through the village of Polsham, our eyes constantly attracted to the pyramidal hill of Tor, with its dark tower, the landmark for twenty miles round—Tor, with its sad memories of the cruel murder of the Abbot Whyting and his brother monks, after their mock trial at Wells, by command of the commissioners of Henry VIII.; and as we neared Glastonbury, upon our right hand, we saw the meadows where in old time lay the mere where the lake-dwellers built their huts upon rafts of wattle, teased their wool with bone combs, made their black pottery, hammered out their rude iron implements of war, fashioned their beautiful bronze bowls, made

PRIEST'S HOUSE, MUCHELNEY.

MAMMOTH
BEL

their stone sinkers for the nets, and hollowed out solid trees into their rough canoes.

On a day like this, with the sun pouring down upon the orchards, with the air filled with fragrance from the elder-flower, the towering elms right and left of us tall domes of sunshine, we could well understand how the wounded Arthur determined to make his way hither :

> Where falls not hail, nor rain, nor any snow,
> Nor ever wind blows loudly,
> Where he might heal him of his grievous wound.

We passed the beautiful church of St. John Baptist, with its open parapet and flying pinnacles, entered the street of picturesque houses that led us toward the market cross, saw the famous George Inn, which since Abbot Selwood's time, in 1490, has entertained pilgrims to the shrine of Joseph of Arimathea, noted the coats of arms and entablatures and its mullioned windows, saw, next to the George Hotel, the famous Hall of Justice, or Tribunal, with its large bay window, which once in its emblazoned panes bore the arms of the Abbot of Glastonbury and the King of England, and thence away to the left, gained the Abbey portal.

Nothing could exceed the sense of peaceful orderliness of the whole Abbey grounds. We rejoiced to think that henceforth every stone will

be cared for, and we must needs congratulate the Bishop of Bath and Wells, Dr. Kennion, on his having raised the necessary £30,000 for the purchase of the ruins, in 1907, when they came into the market.

I had seen St. Joseph's Chapel some years ago, but could not have believed it was the same building that I gazed upon to-day. The ivy had all been removed, the ruinous walls had been repaired, the crypt and well, filled probably of old with water from the Chalice well, had been cleared out, and the stone steps that gave access to it replaced. We were able to get a clear idea of the beauty of the Norman building, supposed to have been erected in the time of Henry II, one of the best specimens remaining of the transition style from Norman to early English. It was with some difficulty we tore ourselves away from the delight of the north doorway, and the view of the six windows with their compartments of rich zigzag arches, whose spandrils were adorned with roses and crescents and stars.

A little to the south-west rose up above the orchard trees the most perfect remains of an Abbot's kitchen that exist in Britain, but we turned our backs upon them and made for the Abbey proper, astonished by what must have been the size of the original building, and its

height as evidenced by the still standing abutments of the tower arch. We walked over the turf-clad choir towards what must have been the high altar, and remembered that tradition tells us that here, before this high altar, by the side of his Queen Guinevere, was laid to rest King Arthur.

How many other kings' and abbots' dust is mingled beneath the sod we cannot know, but at least the Kings Edmund, Edgar, and Edmund Ironsides were entombed here, and we feel that we are indeed on sacred and historic ground. Here Alfwold the Thane, ages before this central shrine of British Christendom was erected, had his wattled house.

Passing eastward we saw the ground-plan of the famous Edgar Chapel, which Mr. Bond, to whom we are so greatly indebted for his work on the Abbey remains, has marked out permanently; and though we may smile at his quaint conversation with the spirits of the Ancient Abbey Builders, and may have our doubts as to the date of the mediæval English writing and the monkish Latin spoken, by which these same spirits appear to have communicated their information to him, as recorded in his book *The Gate of Remembrance*, we must at any rate believe in his *bona-fides*, and thank him for his earnestness of pursuit and his conscientious labour. To

those who believe that the men who have passed away remember with constant affection their old homes and the work of their hands upon earth, his book will have peopled the Abbey grounds with such characters as Camillus Thesiger; Ibericus, the treasure bringer; Johannes Lory, the master-mason; Peter Lightfoot, the clock giver; Abbot Bere; and the child of nature, Johannes de Glaston, who loved this place as a dog loves his master, and we can only hope that when the war ends his archæological efforts may be continued. To Mr. Caroë also we owe great thanks for his work of strengthening and preserving such parts of the building as remain to us.

Leaving the Abbey grounds, we left our hearts behind us, for we who had come from the north felt that in old days relics of our northern saints were here held in highest honour. Something of Aiden, Bede, Benedict-Biscop, and Cuthbert were here treasured, and the white arm of St. Oswald, in whose memory the Grasmere children still bear their rushes to St. Oswald's Church, was long time here preserved.

We visited the museum hard by, much interested in the lake-dwellers' relics there, and the fragments of Roman and Samian pottery, and last, but not least, the interesting drawings that reconstruct for us the probable aspect of the

lake-dwellers' settlement. So wonderfully preservative was the peat in which these objects were buried, that I was informed by one present at the excavation that the glossy green upon a beetle's wing, buried all these centuries, was as bright when found as if the creature were alive.

Leaving the town, we bore a little to the right with Weary-all Hill above us on our left—Weary-all, with its memories of Joseph of Arimathea and his thorn tree, of St. Patrick and his last resting-place ; and so on through avenues of elms, and hedgerows filled with wild roses and traveller's joy, through Street and Somerton, towards Langport, much interested in an old market building and mullioned windows of houses near by.

We pulled up short of Langport station to visit the far-famed Kelway Nurseries, and went through acres of peonies, flowering in the long grasses under the chequered shadow of orchards. It was explained to us that these peonies delight and blossom longer in this comparative shade, and we turned away a little saddened to think that the war has called away one hundred and fifty men from these nurseries, and has turned a perfectly ordered garden into a semi-wilderness.

We were allowed view of prize delphiniums, which were just being packed for the Royal

Horticultural Show, in London. Wonderful shades, from brightest blue to darkest purple, and every conceivable blend of these colours, some white-eyed, some dark-eyed, miracles of gentian blue, and grey flushed with pink.

Thence we left for Muchelney, passing through acres of roses by way of Huish Episcopi. The tall tower of the parish church, with its beautiful pierced stone grilles or panels to allow of light to the belfry, all gilded over with yellow lichen, is a vision not to be forgotten, so on by roads flanked on either side with pollarded willows in their bright summer dress, we made our way to Muchelney.

We pulled up at the pretty village cross, with Muchelney church on one side of the road and opposite it the fourteenth-century priest's house that we had come to see. It is impossible to describe the beauty of the flowery setting of that old house—so snugly thatched, or to speak too highly of its careful restoration since it came into the hands of the National Trust.

The garden enclosure in front of the house was to-day filled with colour. Blue anchusa, red valerian, yellow coreopsis seemed to run riot for exuberance of joy.

Lifting the pretty iron latch of the old oak door beneath its mullioned arch, we were welcomed by the present tenant, who at once

showed us all over the house. On the left was the kitchen, on the right was what was originally the refectory formerly open to the roof, now ceiled for a bedroom above, whose chief features were the fine perpendicular windows. Through the refectory was the priest's room, and from it went up a stairway, to what was his bedchamber above. A passage from the front door, dividing the kitchen from these rooms, ran through the house to another mullioned doorway which led to a small garden behind. All that one could wish for in any future improvements, was the opening up of some of the windows to give more light to the sitting-room below, and further ventilation by opening more of the leaded lights of both the sitting-room and bedroom windows.

We came away feeling very grateful to the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings for having, at the instance of the National Trust, carried out the repairs with such judgment for the small sum of £200. When through the kind offices of the Vicar of the parish, the Rev. Joseph Stubbs, the National Trust obtained this house in 1911, it was in a most dilapidated condition, and the back wall was about to fall. The house was only secured just in time to save it.

As we sat on the steps of the old village cross, and looked at the little fourteenth-century house of the priests secular, we could go back

in dream to the time when this village was so surrounded by water-meadows and the marshes of the Parratt, as to be called, what its name implies, the Great or Muckle Island.

It was because of the security given by these marshes that Athelstan founded his abbey south-east of the parish church of to-day, of which some of the domestic buildings, now the Abbey Farm, alone remain. With the ordinance of Walter, Bishop of Bath and Wells, dated December, 1308, in mind, we could not help feeling in this time of war that if Sir Richard Baldewyne of Mertok, Vicar of the parish church of Muchelney, could come back to his humble dwelling, he would find himself at one with all of his parishioners who are now enduring war rations, and would probably be able to share a large amount of his bread and ale with members of his flock to their much satisfaction ; for by that ordinance the Bishop decreed that the Vicar and his successors should daily receive, from the cellarer of the convent, a monk's bread of the weight of sixty shillings, and two gallons of ale of the best conventual ale ; and from the kitchen a dish of fresh meat on Sundays and on Tuesdays, and a dish of eggs or fish on the other days of the week at the cook's pleasure.

We, with our meatless days, should be in

sympathy with him, and many of us who have to pay fourpence apiece for our eggs, would envy him not a little when on Holy Friday and Easter Day all the bread, eggs, and other oblations that came to the cross were handed over to the Vicar as his perquisites.

We were unable to see the church, which was locked up, but before we left Muchelney we rambled into the farmyard attached to the Abbey Farm, and learnt from its master, who was very busy housing hay, which strapping wenches with their carts delivered to him, that what originally he believed was used as part of the kitchen and the refectory for the Abbot, was now his apple and cider storehouse.

The light buttresses of that building, with their strange hoods, the fine carving and entablature of the walls, the exquisite effect of shadow and sun, and the picturesque grouping of the various angles and recesses of the substantial pile that remains, were full of beauty, and we envied the farm folk who dwelt in such noble surroundings.

Then off we went through willowy lanes by Drayton and Hambridge, villages of thatched roofs with portugal laurels in flower, gardens of straight clipped yews, and houses bowered with roses, till turning up what seemed a by-lane beneath o'ershadowing elms, we found ourselves

in the picturesque village of Barrington; and passing through the village, with its almost miniature cottages, and a church with octagon tower rising out of a cruciform body, came in sight first of the substantial Georgian stables, and then of the Elizabethan house of Barrington Court beyond, with its striking twisted finials and chimneys. A nearer view made us realize the beauty of its narrow gables and many-mullioned windows, and pulling up at the side doorway, with its comparatively modern porch, built by a Mr. Petre in exquisite harmony with the rest of the building, we asked for admittance. It was an unfortunate moment, for it was the dinner hour at the farm, and Mr. Jacobs, the farmer, who, short-handed, was working long hours, could not of course be kept from his dinner. We therefore went round to the front of the house to gain some idea of its magnificence, and were not a little distressed to find that the two deodars planted before the house, in the deep recess made by its outjutting wings, were rapidly growing in such a way as to hide some of its chief beauty.

It was impossible to gain a full idea of the extent of the house without getting some distance from it, by passing across the rough meadow in front. The farther we went from it, the more the "Glory of Somerset," as it has

been called, grew upon us. We saw at once, as was fitting in the time of Elizabeth, that the house had been built in the form of the letter E. The angle buttresses of the wings and porch rose up to twisted terminals. These ended in cupola-like tops. The gable ends were finished with like terminals, and all the chimneys were twisted and gave great lightness and attraction to the building. Light and grace were its marked features. The mullioned windows, with arched heads and water-tables above, were all in keeping with the best Tudor architecture. The porch had a fine Tudor arch with rooms above it and gables on either hand.

One could not help wondering how it was possible such a splendid pile had ever been erected in a position from which little outlook was attainable, for the view was bounded by the featureless slope of the near hill, and the absence of large timber was not compensated for by the great orchards that stretched away from one end of the house. Those orchards reminded us that one of the chief assets of the tenant is the possibility of cider-making. How good that cider was we were soon to know, for Mr. Jacobs, with true yeoman courtesy, sent out to beg us rest in the front porch, and with the message also sent a jug of his own excellent liquor.

The lady of the house soon appeared to show us over it, and entering the great hall we found its floor filled to overflowing with barrels of the local beverage. We went from room to room, troubled beyond measure by evidence of the thoughtless gutting of the house by former owners. What panelling remained was for the most part of painted deal. The oak staircase and oak panellings and balustrading of the staircase had all been removed. We owe it to the care of the National Trust, advised by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, that the roofing timbers and ceiling rafters are now sound, and at least one fire-place concealed by brickwork and plaster has been uncovered.

We noticed as we went through the house the enormous amount of space used for passages, and the comparatively small number of living-rooms. A good insight into Elizabethan ways was gained by our visit to the huge open garrets, with little recesses for cubicles to accommodate the servants, which ran from end to end of the house. We were not astonished to hear that at one time five hundred Parliamentary soldiers were accommodated in this attic. The only creatures accommodated there now are the owls, and though the windows have been built up to prevent their easy entrance, they still find their way thither, and as our hostess told us, make a

BARRINGTON COURT.

HAMPSTEAD
PUBLIC LIBRARIES

noise at night as if people were shuffling about and dragging weights over the rough boarding.

Gutted and destroyed inside as it is, the interior of the house still contains a little fine plaster work and some fairly good eighteenth-century panelling, but its exterior, built of the finely coloured Ham Hill stone, remains a very beautiful example of a sixteenth-century country residence. There is some uncertainty about its history, but it is thought that it was built by Henry, Lord Daubeny, whom Henry VIII created first Earl of Bridgwater. It afterwards came into possession of the families of Clifton, Phelips, and Strode.

But for bad company, one would have wished to have been here on the great occasion when James, Duke of Monmouth, was making his pseudo-royal progress through Somersetshire, and was guest here within a few months of the Battle of Sedgemoor, with its end to all his dreams of English kingship.

The history of how Barrington Court came into the hands of the Trust is as follows: In 1904 it was in the market, and together with 220 acres of land was purchasable for £10,500. Towards this sum the late Miss Woodward, who at that time wished her gift to be anonymous, contributed £10,000, subject to the payment of its interest during two lives, on the condition

that the Trust would raise another £1,500 to complete the purchase, and to put the house into such repair as would preserve it weather-proof and free from possibility of further decay. This the Trust agreed to do, because it felt that, for all lovers of architecture, such a unique example of an Elizabethan country residence ought not to be allowed to pass away. The money was therefore raised by public subscription, and in 1907 this stately home of England became its property.

The Trust is fortunate in having for its tenant a member of the family which for a hundred years past has farmed the Barrington Court farm and dwelt in the house. Mr. and Mrs. Jacobs take a natural pride in the preservation of their old home and in doing the honours to visitors.

We turned away from Barrington Court with real regret and many backward-looking glances, and can only hope that the time may come when some one with a real love of architecture and a long pocket may be able to replace the oaken beauty of the interior and make the house, what it should never have ceased to be, the dignified home of a country gentleman.

Our next visit was to the Quantock home of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. For contrast nothing could be greater. Here a magnificent country palace, there a tiny cottage. But to get there

we must needs drive to Langport station, and thence, skirting the Sedgemoor battlefield, now quiet, marshy, meadow land, with acres of osiers for the basket-makers of England, and so by way of Athelney, with its echoes of Alfred's time and Alfred's battle-ground, to Durston or Thorston with memory of the Viking age, to Bridgwater, from whence on the morrow we could start for Nether Stowey.

NETHER STOWEY

WE left the ancient town of Bridgwater, that received its charter from the hands of King John in 1200, left the noble and life-like bronze statue by Pomeroy of the great sea admiral, Robert Blake, who was born in this town in the year 1598 in the little Tudor house that is still standing, with some regret that it was impossible to identify the historic inn in which de Quincey first met and made friends with Samuel Taylor Coleridge ; but we did not leave the town until we had first made acquaintance, by passing down George Street into Dampiet Street, of the plain red Unitarian chapel, with its shell-shaped hooded porch, in which the philosopher and poet had often preached between the years 1797 and 1800, when, as a new building, it replaced the old Unitarian chapel which was first built here in 1688.

We left behind the tall spired church, whose altar-piece preserves to-day a remarkable painting of the "Descent from the Cross," attributed to Murillo, which was taken from a Spanish

privateer by a British man-o'-war at the end of the eighteenth century—a church well worth visiting, if only for sight of the Jacobean pulpit and the fine carving of the town councillors' pew, and for its open hammer-beam roof.

We passed westward through a pleasant suburb, whose gardens were filled with lavender and roses, gained an open country of rolling grass and corn fields, made beautiful by elm trees, and passing Cannington, with its red sandstone tower, its substantial Queen Anne type of house, and its picturesque yellow-washed cottages, we were soon aware of the sloping Quantock ridge ahead of us, fern-clad and pine-clad, with here and there coral-pink blotches on its side of arable land.

The colour of the soil became more pronounced as we went forward, till the road itself became a veritable way of roses. Who can describe the beauty of the hedgerows, fragrant with privet and honeysuckle, and filled with angelica, meadowsweet, and rue, wild roses, red sorrel, and gay with pink campion? After four miles of this beauty we turned sharply to the right, and soon found ourselves entering the village of Nether Stowey, went by the little church with its quaint angular turret, the great retaining wall of the court-house and its parapet of yew, with quaint Queen Anne pleasure house high

uplifted at the angle. This court-house in old days was the seat of Alfred the Spaniard, and the families of de Chandos and Audley, and its high wall, it is believed, was built for protection against the Parliamentarians. Tradition has it that in time of civil war many of the local gentry sent their valuables to be guarded by this great wall. We went by some fine Scotch firs into the village—a village of the dead so far as human life was concerned, for nothing was stirring in the street. We passed the clock tower, which now takes the place of the old market cross, and pulled up at the unpretentious little house, that a few years ago ceased to be a public house of call, under the title of "The Coleridge Cottage Inn," and which has become a national monument to the genius of Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

This cottage was first obtained on lease for a term of fifteen years, with option of purchase for £600 at the end of the lease, through the energy of a local committee of which Mr. Greswell the Rector of Doddington, Mr. Ernest Coleridge, Mr. Dykes Campbell, and Mr. St. Barbe Goldsmith were lessees. In 1906, two years before the lease ran out, Professor Knight visited Nether Stowey, and determined that what had been done for Wordsworth at Grasmere, should be done for Samuel Taylor Coleridge at Nether Stowey.

He re-organized the scheme and formed a

committee, consisting of the Earl of Crewe, the Right Hon. Sir James Bryce, the Right Hon. Sir Edward Fry, Canon Beeching, Canon Rawnsley, Mr. G. W. Prothero, Mr. J. H. Etherington Smith, the Rev. W. Greswell, and Mr. Ernest Hartley Coleridge, and with the help of Mr. Frederick Harrison, and with a contribution of £200, given to the fund by Mr. Carnegie, and of £50 granted by the National Trust, he was enabled to purchase the property in 1908, and to transfer it to the National Trust in the following year.

It has been restored with admirable care. The outside, covered with cream-coloured rough-cast, is already becoming draped with creepers. A well-designed tablet of sandstone as an inset in the wall, which was placed there as early as 1893, and became incentive to the leasing of the cottage, bears within a sculptured laurel wreath the words :

"HERE SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE MADE HIS HOME 1797–1800."

We entered the house, and were welcomed by the present tenants, who showed us on the right hand a room which was the living-room of those days, and is now a picture gallery of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and his friends. The bookcase is filled with the biographies of the poet. The

table, chairs and couch were those of his time. We could not help feeling how entirely analogous to the Town End cottage at Grasmere was this lowly dwelling, where plain living and high thinking went so well together, and where, as Richard Reynell tells us, Coleridge's life was "happy without superfluities." In this little six-roomed house, four at the front and two at the back—for the other rooms are a later addition—Coleridge not only dwelt, but entertained his friends. How often in this simple parlour had William and Dorothy Wordsworth held high discourse with the philosopher? What pleasant converse had Charles Lloyd and Thomas Poole and Charles Lamb with him in those halcyon days of Coleridge's early married life, when, as he himself writes, he found "Nature looking at him with a thousand looks of beauty, and speaking to him in a thousand melodies of love."

We lingered some time in the little room, which contains so many portraits of the poet, and wondered why it was there was no picture of his wife or either of his two sons, Hartley and Derwent. Then passing upstairs we saw the little rough oaken-floored attic bedroom of the poet, that took our thoughts back again to the humble bedchamber of Wordsworth at the Town End cottage. Thence into the tiny room opposite, that heard Sarah Coleridge's earliest

COLERIDGE'S COTTAGE, NETHER STOWEY

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cry, and descending, entered the drawing-room of the tenant of to-day, in which, as Coleridge has left on record, he waited so anxiously to hear of the birth of that darling child of his heart, who grew up to be such an accomplished and beautiful woman.

We went into the garden at the back of the house, with fine view of the Castle mound towering above it, of which no stone remains to tell us of its ancient Norman splendour, and gained a peep at the gable end of Tom Poole's house, from which, in Coleridge's time, ran a pathway so often traversed by the friends. Away in the direction of the Castle mound we noted a cluster of limes, which may have been that "lime tree bower," which once gave shelter to the unwilling prisoner, the poet, and which he immortalized on the day when, through some injury to his foot, he was unable to accompany Wordsworth and Dorothy, Tom Poole and Charles Lamb in their stroll on to the Quantock heights.

We observed a large bay tree growing near the house to remind us that here a poet had had his habitation, then entered a little annexe, which it is hoped will some day be used as a village library.

An enthusiast for the memory of Tom Poole, who is living, as his father lived before him, at the farmhouse on the hill called Hock Pit, in

the centre of the farm lands on which Tom Poole made so many agricultural experiments, had kindly come down to call on us, and now conducted us through bowery lanes of holly and privet up to his interesting house, to which in the old days Tom Poole was such a constant visitor to see his bailiff and talk over farm matters. On our way thither our friend showed us several iron hinges on the field gates which still bear the initials T.P.

The beauty of the garden ground of the old house, filled to-day with roses, was enhanced by a magnificent oak tree, which was still a king of the forest, although owing to the sheer weight of foliage two fine branches had been torn from it last year.

For the moment we forgot Tom Poole in our interest in the account of the experiments made in the breeding of red deer in captivity by our host, who is an ardent naturalist. The antlers of the deer, which for twenty years he had experimented upon with different kinds of food-stuffs, were very remarkable in their variety of shape and size. The result of giving various foods to the deer—bone meal, linseed cake, etc.—had produced antlers which approximated in shape and size to the antlers of young elks. He kindly showed us the way to the main road for Alfoxton, for the Nether Stowey cottage and Alfoxton are inextricably bound together.

Away we went, skirting the fern and gorse-clad slope of the Quantocks, with their wind-blown sentinel Scotch firs black against the blue-grey sky on our left, with meadow land and corn lands sloping down to the grey Bristol Channel, where, like a great granite whale, the Flat Holme Island lay in shadow. Turning sharply to the left at the Plough Inn at Holford, we passed picturesque houses with thatched roof, and gardens filled with white stocks and scarlet geraniums, crossed the glen down which so often Dorothy and Wordsworth had wandered, and through which murmured the brook that inspired both poets with the determination to write a poem "On Man and Nature and Society." So far as Coleridge was concerned this poem remained unwritten, but the idea was crystallized later by Wordsworth in his series of the Duddon Sonnets.

We had reached the entrance of the long drive up to Alfoxton through the woodland, and we remembered that there stood in Wordsworth's day, on the unenclosed bit of common to the left of the gate, the little cottage in which dwelt, by his dog-pound, the original of Wordsworth's "Simon Lee," the huntsman. More than a hundred years have passed, but the doings of that wonderful running huntsman, Christopher Treachey or Tricky, as he was called, who followed the hounds with a light jumping-pole,

by which he cleared the banks and ditches, are still held in memory.

We entered a woodland, left to grow wild and filled with grey-trunked holly trees and spindling oak and ash, made our way for nearly a mile over a rutty and neglected road, to the gate that opened on the grassy meadow, finely timbered and sloping upward to the sky, in which stood the substantial Georgian mansion that had once been let to Wordsworth and his sister for the nominal rent of £23 a year.

No one was living there to-day, for the tenants had removed to Nether Stowey. The garden at the back of the house, of large potentialities, was beginning to show signs of neglect, but with its rambling roses and well-stocked borders proved that loving care had been spent upon it in the past. A hideous auricaria stood almost black against the grey house, the only blot in the garden. Going to the front of the house and ascending the grassy slope, with its fine oak trees, we obtained magnificent view of the Bristol Channel, and realized how constantly the beauty of that moving tide must have woven itself into the dreams of delight with which the poet and his " dear, dear sister " wandered in this sequestered woodland paradise. We may regret that owing to the unfortunate visit of John Thelwall, a well-known reformer, Wordsworth as

suspect of revolutionary ideas was driven from this happy haunt of the Muses, but at any rate the Lake country was the gainer, and dwellers at Grasmere may rejoice.

We returned by the road that so often had been traversed by those "three friends with one soul," as Coleridge described them, and stopped again at the Nether Stowey cottage, which had been such a fountain head of English poesy, for there at least twelve of Coleridge's poems were written; there "The Nightingale" and "The Lime Tree Bower" found their poet; there the first part of "Christabel" was written; there the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" was first chanted, and there the music of "Fears in Solitude," with its touching allusion to his wife and his babe, was hammered out upon the anvil of his thought—a poem that in this year of world-wide war must find an echo in every patriot's heart.

THE HOLNICOTE ESTATE

SIR THOMAS ACLAND was from home, but he had kindly arranged that his agent should show us round the great property of 10,000 acres on Exmoor that with the concurrence of his heirs, he had leased as a gift to the National Trust for a period of 550 years. On a cool June morning, bright after heavy rain, we found ourselves glad to escape from the tourist atmosphere of Minehead, and walking through crystal air, scented with honeysuckle, up the long incline that leads out of Minehead towards Porlock.

From the moment we left the town we knew that we were on the property of our national benefactor, for the new Post-Office at Minehead had been built on the borders of his estate. We knew also that his land was on the seaboard from the end of North Hill to Porlock. After a walk of four and a half miles we came to a cluster of picturesque cottages. "Is this Holnicote village?" we asked. "It baint nothing

to call a village," said a sturdy Somersetshire peasant, "but they do hereabout call it Budleigh Hill, and that out there be Holnicote church, and the entrance to squire's place is 50 yards farther on."

Opposite the entrance to Holnicote we knew stood the white house of the agent, but immediately adjacent to it was so delightful a shepherd's cottage, with its pleasant porch and brown tiled dormer windows, its garden filled with white lupins and purple veronicas, that we paused some time before asking for admittance at the agent's house.

We found him with the plan of the estate open, and learned from it at once that the property leased to the National Trust consisted of three separate areas. (1) North Hill, Holnicote, Combe, and Selworthy Wood on the seaward side of the vale. (2) The Horner valley and woods, reaching up to the famous Cloutsham farm beneath Dunkery; with a great stretch of moorland to Stoke Pero on one hand, and on the other the slopes of Dunkery and the moorland, dropping down to the cultivated farmlands above Luccombe village. (3) The region of Exmoor known as Winsford Hill, with its tumuli of Wam Barrows, its interesting Long Stone memorial of the family of Caractacus, its ancient British bridge called Tarr Steps, over the

Barle, and its pony-breeding farm of modern days at Old Ashway.

"I think," said the agent, "the best way to get a general idea of the property in this neighbourhood will be to take ponies and visit the North Hill first, then cross the valley by Allerford, and pass up the Horner vale to Cloutsham. The roads are steep, and we shall probably not go at more than a walking pace, but we shall be able to do the round in four and a half hours."

We gladly assented. The ponies arrived, and away we went to Budleigh Hill. Then turning from the main road due north, we ascended by a steep lane that allowed us sight of the most picturesque cottages we had seen, with their tall cylindrical chimneys, and their gable ends set at many angles, all marvellously thatched, snug and happy in their garden grounds. We saw many houses that day upon the Holnicote estate, and not one of them, whether roofed with the brown Bridgwater or Staffordshire tiling, or thatched with local straw, but made us feel that an artist had planned it and would wish to have the chance of drawing it.

It was clear that the Lord of the Manor cared not only for the lives of his tenants, but for the beauty of their surroundings. We could not help thinking that the thatched roofing of

his own Holnicote, which we saw later in the day, was but a sign of his sympathy with the dwellers in "huts where poor men lie."

On our right hand stood Selworthy church and vicarage, and close to the roadway the buttressed walls of an old fourteenth-century tithe-barn shut the view. Upward we went towards the open moorland, saw the memorial hut in which Lady Acland delights to enjoy the mountain air, and above it the Bury Castle or earthwork of the aboriginal British times. Away at the head of the Combe, still black from the fire that took place there last year, we saw such a sight of foxglove multitude as we had never before beheld. The grass had been burnt here, and the result of the fire was this magnificent display of foxglove beauty. We went on through fern and heather till we reached the upper down, covered with broom and fescue-grass that shimmered in the wind. Tough feeding this, and only the older sheep can tackle it. Gulls wheeled overhead, and higher still we went northward toward the sea.

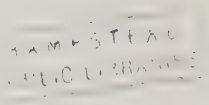
Going forward still farther, we came to the boundary of the National Trust estate, the East and West Myne farmland enclosures. We did not descend to the cliff edge, which here falls precipitously to the sea, but we got a fine view of Bossington Ball, which is part of the National

Trust property to the west, with the Countisbury foreland beyond. Then turning backward, we made our way through moorland heather towards Selworthy Wood, getting a noble view of the Holnicote vale, with the green wooded Horner valley passing up into the folds of the hills beyond it, and Luccombe Hill, reaching up to Cloutsham Ball, beneath the top of Dunkery Beacon.

The National Trust property, we knew, stopped short of the top of the Dunkery Beacon, which is the commanding feature to the south; but we knew also that whilst we were now on a stretch of National Trust property of North Hill, which extended to 1,500 acres, there on Luccombe Hill and Cloutsham was acreage which, including the Horner valley and stretching as far as Stoke Pero, must include something like 5,000 acres more.

We passed steeply down the Holnicote glen through Selworthy Forest, filled with silver fir, spruce, Douglas pine, and Scotch fir, chestnuts, and Wellingtonia, planted by the grandfather of the present owner, and apparently left almost untouched by the woodman's axe ever since they were planted. Carefully made grassy rides passed off left and right of the main track. We were told that in this single wood alone these paths extended for a stretch of twenty-six miles,

THE HORNER WOODS, EXMOOR.



and when we saw their number we could well believe it. What delightful wander-ground on a hot summer day would this cool woodland give to far-off generations !

We dropped down a thousand feet to a little lane bowered to heaven by hazels, and thence along to Allerford, and could hardly pass through the ford for the beauty of the cottage and its ample porch, under which access was given to the hump-backed narrow stone bridge beside the ford. All the houses were covered with roses, and garden grounds were gay with stocks and snap-dragons. We gained the elm-shadowed main road to Porlock, then turned sharply to the left up the Horner lane, which led us by picturesque cottages to the entrance of the Horner valley, and wound up this valley by the side of a stream for a mile.

We have seen many wooded valleys, but nothing more beautiful than this Horner vale. The peculiar feature of the woodland seemed the walnut trees, and my friend pointed out to me the slits in the bark of these trees, made by the frost two winters ago, that must have gone near to killing them. Fortunately they survived, and the scent of their foliage in the hot sunshine filled the air.

At the end of a mile or so we crossed the stream, and turning in the direction of Cloutsham

began so steep an ascent that we were forced to dismount and lead our horses. We gained the top of the ascent and looked down on Priest's Wood and Priest's Way, Parson's Wood and East-water; then, turning backward, saw the glorious woodland of the Horner valley streaming down from the far hills, and the Prickslade and Stoke Pero combes in flood of shadowy emerald. At last we reached that famous hunting centre, the Cloutsham farm. Burnt down two years ago, it has been rebuilt with admirable taste, and though we missed the old oak panelling, we found it panelled throughout with cedar and walnut from the estate, and still in the kitchen, with its huge open fire-place, stood the old settle and the Tudor table that had shown hospitality to the multitude of huntsmen who have rested here.

How many generations of hunting men must have followed the stag in this neighbourhood! Long before William the Conqueror determined that this Exmoor should be one of his five royal forests in Somersetshire, the Saxon Kings hunted here, and as far as the stag-hunting goes we know that from the time of King John onward there were foresters who had grants of the custody of Exmoor on condition that they looked after the hunting. Thus in the thirty-fifth year of Edward I, we find a Walter Baron holding

certain lands and tenements in the village of Holnicote, of the King, for the service of hanging on a certain forked tree stags which died of the murrain in the King's forest of Exmoor.

The present pack of staghounds are the successors of one which Hugh Pollard, ranger of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth, kept at Simon's Bath in the year 1593.

After visiting byres and spacious stables arranged for hospitality for hound and horse, we had a good look at Dunkery hill across the valley, not a little astonished to find that agriculture had crept so far up the sides of a hill whose name implies that our British forefathers had little dreams of growing rye there, for Dunkery means, in British tongue, "the rough hill."

We turned for home through Sideway Wood to the open moorland and Webber's Post. The moor was in part still black from the fire that consumed its heather and gorse a year or two ago. We noted as we went the great love of the Acland family for this part of the property, as evidenced by the names given to the various pathways intersecting it. Here was "The Boy's Path over Dunkery"; there "His Honour's Path." Here, again, "Cabinet Path," and here "Lady Acland's Path," names given to commemorate some event in the history of the family in modern times, or some peculiar care that

some member of the family has for this or that moorland walk. Down through Scotch fir plantations self-sown, we dropped, the Luccombe church and village shining below us among pleasant fields of corn, pasture land, and orchards, and so on by Crooked Horn Lane, walled up to heaven by holly and hazel, till we reached the meadows of Holnicote, and passing the quaint thatched house standing cloistered by ilex and oak, dismounted at the stables. Then to the agent's house to rest till the motor omnibus should take us back to Minehead. It was with no little joy that we remembered how the pleasure of this excursion would in future be shared by wanderers from all parts of the world, and we could not but thank heaven for the generosity which had inspired this gift to the nation.

WINSFORD HILL

OUR visit to Winsford Hill had been fixed for the next day. The agent called for us in his Belsize car at eleven o'clock, and we drove through the brickmaking hamlet of Alcombe, and thence, with a magnificent view of Dunster Castle ahead of us, entered the quaint town of the de Bohuns and the Luttrells, with memories of Roman camp, Saxon palace and Norman castle. We went by the curious octagonal yarn-house, and turning to the right, passed by houses of overhanging stories and beautiful gables, left the magnificent church standing above the hollow archway of the stocks, and went forward into the valley of the Avril, with the huge down, Grabhurst, sloping to its woodland beneath. Through Timberscombe, then southward, by the great white farm of Bickham with its lordly chimneys, standing in meadow lands as rich in pasture as any in this country-side ; over the pink-red roadway, whose surface had been terribly punished by timber wagons ; till climbing a long hill, with Cutcombe

church above us, we reached the summit of the water-shed at Wheddon's Cross, and thence descended for nearly four miles with the Quarme river below us, left the main road and turned sharply westward and pulled up at that most picturesque of thatched public houses, the Royal Oak at Winsford.

The whole village would delight an artist's soul—the ford, the crookbacked bridge, the steep, rocky way to the church, the houses perched above us at all angles, beautiful with their home-like look of sunny welcome, and gay with their peaceful garden plots. Entering the church we noted the decoration, a royal coat of arms of James I's reign on the north wall, with its quaint quotation from Holy Writ, saw the Norman font, and the ironwork that looked of Norman time upon the main doorway. Thence returning to the car, we splashed through the ford, and began a long ascent through hedgerows, filled with fox-glove and honeysuckle, to Comer's Gate, marvelling what would happen if by ill-luck we should chance to meet either cart or carriage.

At Comer's Gate we entered the National Trust estate, and drove along the central high-way that runs for three miles over a treeless moor of heather, mixed with bright green whortle-berry and young bracken. We were on high ground, 1,100 feet above sea-level. Away to

the south-west lifted Dunkery Beacon. What astonished us most was that, on the high swelling uplands right and left of us, the ground was covered with promise of future harvest—patches of green corn, striped here and there with other patches of golden charlock, whilst out of the hedgerows stood up trees almost of forest growth.

I expressed doubts as to the wisdom of ploughing on such high ground, but my friend assured me it was a favourable season, and the harvest would be gathered. "After all," he said, "we are, in this war time, returning to old ways hereabout, for the early Celtic inhabitants of this country-side tilled a large part of Winsford Hill," and as he spoke he pointed out the ancient banks with which they had enclosed the cultivated fields so many centuries ago.

No grouse are found here, but the black game breed and flourish. After passing along for a couple of miles in this magnificent air we came to the cross-roads that lead respectively to Cutcombe and down to Tarr or Torr Steps.

We were attracted by a little stone pent-house, solitary on the moorland, and left the car to inspect the famous "Long Stone," as it is called. This stone, which leans much out of the perpendicular, is of hard, slaty rock, 3 feet 7 inches high and 14 inches wide. Its inscription commemorates either the nephew of Caractacus or,

as is more probable, one of the missioner Cambrian saints of old time, St. Carantacus, whom Leyland tells us was held in honour as Patron Saint at Carhampton, and the fact that this inscribed stone stands in the hundred of Carhampton makes this seem probable.

It is certainly very remarkable how all along this coast the Cambrian saints have left their mark. Thus, for example, the church of Porlock is dedicated to St. Dobritius, who, tradition says, married King Arthur to his Queen Guinevere, and died in 523. At Culbone we find St. Columbanus commemorated, and the name of St. Donatus is preserved at two places on the coast. At Watchet stands the church made famous by the Rime of the Ancient Mariner, which is dedicated to St. Decumanus. Here though Professor Rhys read the letters on the inscribed stone as "Caraticus epus," the first letter N of the last word being lost by the flaking of the stone, Mr. Greswell favours the reading of "Carantacus," the N being elided, and only suggested by a single mark above. Whatever be the history of this stone, we cannot be too thankful that it should be so cared for and protected from weather and destruction as it is now.

For here on Winsford Hill we are back in a very ancient historic past. Mounsey Castle, a British encampment, is not far away. Down

in the hollow lies the most interesting prehistoric bridge, Torr or Tarr Steps, that exists in Somersetshire ; and as we stand by this stone of Caranticus we can go back in fancy to a time when as yet the name of Christ had not been heard in this wild upland.

There is reason to believe that the folk who made their rude enclosures for tilth hereabout, and raised their earthworks for defence, were the Belgic Celts, who settled on these seaward moorlands, *sea-moor-sætas,* who came here about 350 B.C. They gave the names, that still exist, to Dunkery, to Cutcombe, to Dulverton and Dunster, they were never defeated by Roman or Dane, and even when Athelstan made the land English, in the year 926, and drove many of the inhabitants beyond the Tamar, they still clung to the higher grounds, and have left behind them, in the colour of the hair and in the dark eyes of the farm folk of the district, ineffaceable racial characteristics that tell us they are Belgic Celts still.

Leaving the "Long Stone," we went down swiftly from the upland and made our way by Liskham farm, to Tarr or Torr Steps, by one of the steepest and worst metalled roads a motor-car was ever driven over. The silence of the moorland was changed for the singing of birds. The blackbird fluted, and the garden warbler

thrilled the air with his ecstasy. As we went we saw on the opposite side of the valley a drove of Exmoor ponies, and determined to visit the pony farm on our return journey. We had heard much of the wonder of the prehistoric Tarr Steps, and were not disappointed. Across the silver-shining Barle the long-vanished race had determined to build, not only for futurity, but in such a manner as to defy all rage of flood that the Barle could fling against it. They laid their rough piers four feet above the ordinary summer level of the stream, and protected these piers with sloping fender stones. Then, with exquisite nicety, they poised upon these piers huge slabs of grey rock, the biggest 8 feet long by 5 feet wide. They used no mortar, but they must have had very accurate knowledge of weight and the power of resistance of weight against the rushing water-flood. These stones remain just as they were placed, probably more than two thousand two hundred years ago, though the river in winter time has been known to rise 4 feet above the bridge.

One does not know which to wonder at most : the accurate laying of the stones, which reminds one of the exquisite craft of pyramid builders, or the labour by which these great weights were conveyed hither ; for Sir Thomas Acland told me that each of these stones must have been brought

from a distance of not less than twenty miles. The postman came across as we were studying them. "Who do you think built this bridge?" I asked.

"Well," said he, "we can't rightly tell, but they do say that it was 'the old fellow.' I have had to cross her many a time when the water has been over her, and I could scarcely keep my feet. It is very dangerous crossing then."

Some happy children passed along. Where were they going to? "To Tarr Steps' farm, sir." "And how is it you are not at school?" "We have got a half-holiday, sir, for the shearing."

How beautiful that reach of the Barle is, as the river, broadening out for the ford, passes under the bridge and rustles through the forget-me-nots into the gloom of the alder grove beyond, and how many centuries of use and joy this work of prehistoric man has been to all the pastoral and pilgrim life that has flowed together to this solitude from past ages!

We ascended the steep hill from the ford with difficulty, and made our way to Old Ashway farm, in which for generations the Acland family have reared their pure-blooded drove of Exmoor ponies. The master of the house was away, but his only daughter, a pure Celt, with her raven-black hair and dark eyes, gave us courteous welcome, and learning that we wished to see the

ponies, who for all we knew might be at the back-of-beyond, she ran off to hail a lad to help her, and in a few moments two of the ponies used to the work of rounding up the rest, came scampering down to the farmyard, and made straight for their stalls. Whilst the lad was saddling them she went to the house, and Diana of the Moor, after making a dramatically quick change, reappeared in riding kit of khaki coat and breeches, red cap and stock whip in hand, and in another moment was mounted and we saw her flashing up the hill, she and the pony as one, and while she disappeared from sight the lad went off on his pony in another direction. We waited ten minutes or so, and a drove of twenty delicate-limbed creatures, with mealy muzzles, rushed down on to the meadow beside the farm, and drew up short to gaze at the strangers. I noticed that on the ham of each pony was the indelible Acland mark for pure breed, an anchor, and I ascertained that the average number of foals each year is about forty; that of these about twenty are kept, as up to standard in size and colour, for three or four years, but the rest are sold as suckers.

The great fair of the year, at which all Exmoor ponies are sold, takes place at Bampton on the third Thursday in October, when by use immemorial the whole main street is given up to a

ramping, trampling multitude. The shutters are put up and the whole place during the time of sale is pandemonium. But every Exmoor pony that goes there finds a buyer, the bulk of them being destined for pit ponies, for which they are in constant demand.

It was a little sorrowful to think that these bright-eyed creatures, such embodiments of the spirits of the moorland, should be allowed so short a time in the sun and wind upon their native uplands.

"But you would like to see the foals?" said the daughter of the farm.

We assented, and away she and the boy flew, and again we waited till we saw, careering over the hill in the distance, the lithe forms with foals at heel; and presently the drove came thundering down to the farm; and there, whilst a couple of stallions engaged in familiar combat, bit and pawed at each other like pugilists, the mothers and their foals stood unconcerned and gave us fair view.

Then the clever show-woman cracked her whip, and away they sped into the distance, and were seen no more. We thanked her and bade adieu to Old Ashway, wondering at her skill in horsemanship. Back we went up Winsford Hill to the cross-roads, and turning to the right made our way down to the old British ford town by

the river's bend, Dulverton of to-day, by a road protected from the wind by huge hedges of hollies and hazel.

There we rested and took tea, while heavy rain flushed the village street and drove all passers-by to shelter. The rain partially ceased, and homeward we went up the beautiful valley of the Exe, where rich woodland draped the hill-sides and sloped to lush meadow lands, whose hedgerows were purple with agrimony and fox-gloves. So on by Wheddon Cross and Timbers-combe to Dunster. There we pulled up to see the beautifully restored rood-screen, and the fine alabaster monuments of the Luttrell family, and could not help congratulating the restorers for the love and care with which they had done their work. We reached Minehead with imperishable memories of the National Trust property of Winsford Hill.

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MORTE POINT

WE were anxious to visit Morte Point, between Ilfracombe and Barnstaple, on the Devonshire coast. Fifty-two acres of that beautiful headland were given to the National Trust in 1909, in memory of her parents, the late Sir Alexander and Lady Chichester, by Miss Chichester. By her wish this gift to the public was to be called Morte Point Memorial Park.

It is no easy matter, even in the times of piping peace, to journey hither from Minehead ; in time of war the expedition is " linked sweetness long drawn out," and owing to waste of time upon the journey at Taunton and Barnstaple less sweet than long. But it was pleasant to find oneself at Dulverton, and to pass through the rolling country that fringes Exmoor. At Barnstaple we had time to visit the famous bridge over the Tor, and to see the tidal river rushing up with yellow foam through the arches. It seemed a great pity to us that when the good

people of Barnstaple felt it necessary to widen the bridge by a footway on either side of it, they should have allowed so mean an iron fence by way of parapet to be used. If a light stone parapet had been impossible a solid oaken fence, or wrought iron railing would have been preferable.

We made our way thence by the pleasant village of St. Brannock, Braunton of to-day, up the steep incline to Morthoe station. Leaving the train we felt at once the exhilaration of the sunny sea air, and dropped swiftly down to Woollacombe Bay. A glorious tide with the wind behind it was lacing the sands with foam. From Baggy Point to the south, round to the Morte headland northward, the great sea-horses ramped and foamed, and as we walked the shining sands the blue sea was suddenly changed to ridge upon ridge of silver whiteness, which, as the waves neared the shore, spread themselves out in flat scallops of foam, that seemed to caress the sands and float backward reluctantly to the sea, leaving long shining mirrors for the white clouds, and for the soft green rushy dunes of Challacombe. Far as the eye could see, the fume and spume of the incoming tide flickered and made a mirage in the sunlight. The happy voices of indefatigable children mixed with the sound of the sea. There is no paradise for these little

ones on the North Devon coast so safe, so spacious, with such potentiality of pleasure.

Far out to sea Lundy Island lay like a cloud, that as the sun sank appeared a purple bar against the horizon, and from the gates of the dying day came promise of a brilliant to-morrow.

But the day was long in dying, and after the sun had set on this the longest day of the year, the horizon was lit up by a band of coral pink, which, while the sea lay softly grey, flushed the wet sands to magic rose and gave us back at our feet its far-off beauty.

The promise was not belied, and next morning found us on our way to Morte Point, with the sun and wind upon our faces and a cloudless blue sky overhead. We went by such hedges of purple-spiked and honey-scented veronica as we had never seen, reached in half an hour Morthoe and the ascent to its ancient church. After passing the Castle Rock hotel, though there was no notice to tell us that this was the way to Morte Point, we might have descended to the grassy path along the sea front, and so gained the headland direct by a short cut, but we went forward to see the ancient church of St. Mary Magdalene, Morthoe, with its memory of the murderer of Thomas à Becket haunting us. Tradition tells us that this old church with two others, Martinhoe and Trentishoe, were founded

by Sir William Tracy—one of the four knights who murdered Thomas à Becket—in expiation of his deed, whilst he dwelt in retirement at the old Barton farm above Woollacombe Bay, his penance being "to make bundles of the sand and binds or wisps of the same." His body is supposed to be buried in the aisle of this church he built, but this is very unlikely, for he died in Italy, leaving behind him a name unblessed in this neighbourhood, but not unpitied; for if anything goes wrong with an unfortunate person a local proverb says, "Wind and weather are still against him like Sir William Tracy."

We went on by the Wesleyan chapel to the church. It was a great relief after passing the modern incongruous architecture of red-brick shops and lodgings to find the old white farm buildings and cottages of old-time Morthoe. The low square tower of the church, substantially built, gained beauty on the northern side from the golden lichens on its string courses. The quaint carving of the instruments of the Passion and other emblems on the oaken seat-ends were interesting, as also was the cornice in the porch, probably a fragment of an ancient rood screen. The altar tomb of a Tracy in the south transept is a composite tomb of two very different dates. The table-top of the tomb is a thick slab of porphyry-coloured moor-stone, wider at the head

than at the foot, probably of the twelfth century. It has been much damaged, but still one can clearly see incised the figure of a robed priest holding a chalice in his hands. The inscription in Lombardic characters is Norman-French, and has been restored to read thus :

"Syr Wiliame de Tracy git ici, Deu del alme eyt mercy."

But the substructure on which the tomb rests is of free-stone, elaborately carved in bold relief, on one side three shields of arms with the figures of St. Catherine and St. Mary Magdalene, in honour of whom a chantry was founded in this church by William Tracy, Rector of Morthoe, 1322. At the end of the tomb is represented a crucifixion, and on the south side a series of panels of the Decorated period when the chantry was built. It is clear, therefore, that two interments are commemorated here of two William Tracys—one belonging to the twelfth century and the other to the fourteenth.

We returned from the church downhill, to the Wesleyan chapel, thence, where a sign-post points the way, we entered a path through rough pasture, made interesting by dodder-covered gorse and heather, and patches of sheep's-bit-scabious and pink thrift, which led us down to a quiet hollow where the parishioners of Morthoe now find

burial. The wall which surrounds this God's Acre had been carefully planted on its inner side with golden aucuba, which gave a sense of kindly shelter, without the bareness and austerity of the naked wall which so often disfigures modern cemeteries.

The names of Lee and Bere, so characteristic of these Devon sea-coast villages, were inscribed upon the headstones, and one only regretted that instead of using native rock, which would have harmonized with the surroundings, there was an evident desire on the part of surviving relatives to use the perishable "glorified chalk"—white marble—for memorials of the dead.

Going on through one or two rough meadows we found ourselves at the boundary wall of the National Trust property which runs across the headland. On either side of the iron gates that gave admittance were two large pilasters of masonry. On these were incised, on grey granite panels and somewhat difficult to read, the following inscription—on the left, the words :

"Morte Point Memorial Park,"

and on the right-hand pilaster, in Latin, and therefore not to be understanded of the people :

"Hic ager in usum civium dedicatus et ea causa curatoribus mandatus est ut Alexandri Palmer Bruce

Chichester Baronetti, de villa Arlingtoniensi, et Rosalæ Ameliæ uxoris ejus memoria in Perpetuum curaretur.

MDCCCCIX."

We followed the sheep-nibbled turf path that leads to the new way made round the northern side of the headland by the generous donor, so well engineered that invalids in their bath-chairs can pass along it. Thence we ascended to the top of the headland, and gained a view of the grey rocks of Bull Point, with the white lighthouse surmounting it, beyond the jagged Rockham Bay, and on the southern side saw the full curve of Woollacombe Bay, shining like a golden sickle edged with silver, to the blue sea away to Baggy Point, while Hartland Point stretched out silver-grey in the sea mist farther to the south. Shoreward the grassy dunes sloped up to the tilth and rough pasture land of Challacombe. In the immediate foreground, as we looked seaward, the breakers were white upon the sharp-toothed rocks of Morte Stone, that stone of death for so many a passing ship in time of fog and storm.

Nothing astonished us more than the beauty of the colour of the ragged rocks that each day feel the tide. They shone in the sun like gold, while nearer to the land those above high tide stood up like mighty spearheads, steel colour and silver-grey.

We turned for home by the old road track on the southern side of Morte Point, by which the carts used to come for builder's stone, and sitting on one of the rough seats provided for the public —in the sunshine—we fell to talk with an old parishioner, himself a mason, who is now doing duty with his telescope as coastguard substitute. He had seen in his lifetime at least twenty wrecks upon that fatal Morte Stone. "No chance for them if they touch that stone, for our rocket lines cannot reach them. It is a different thing in the bay. I have helped to save many lives with the line and rocket there."

The old fellow had been for more than twenty years sexton of the parish church, and speaking of it he said: "It is a pity we have no records left." And then he retold us the story of the murderer of Thomas à Becket, and of the founding of the three churches by way of expiation.

"It's a pity," he said, "that monument in the church has been spoilt. When I was a lad I remember the carpenters used it for a bench and knocked it about a deal. But I've seen that tomb opened, sir, with my own eyes. It was in 1857 as it was opened."

"What was in it?" I asked.

"Well, there was a lot of bones and big-headed nails, same as might have been used for his coffin, but there was no skull."

I said: "That is curious, for skulls, or especially the jawbone, are nearly always found."

"There was no head in that coffin, that's all I know about it," he said.

We had a talk about the war, and I asked if there was much trouble in the bay with submarines. "Well, there's a deal of mine-sweeping going on," he said, "and a great mine was washed ashore not long ago; and sometimes we hear the ships firing, but what they're firing at of course we don't know."

We left him with his telescope, vainly endeavouring to find Clovelly for us; but the sea haze was against him, and the last thing he told us was that he had been present as ringer at the ringing of the bells at the new church on Lundy Island, which had been put up in memory of Mrs. Heaven by members of the family, who until lately were owners of the island.

As we looked out west to Lundy and saw the mine-sweepers at work between us and that old island of Hurcelea, which Ptolemy knew, we remembered how in old time the Danish sea pirates had made it one of their strongholds for descent upon this Devonshire coast, and we could not help the thought that with their wolfish submarines the Germans were less to be held in honour than the daring men who, in Alfred's reign, landed at Appledore, with their twenty-

three ships under Hubba, and lost their raven flag to Odun, Earl of Devon.

We bade the old coastguard adieu, to take our way homeward by the lower path that leads to the National Trust boundary-wall, and surmounting the stone stile noticed the National Trust Byelaws riveted against the wall, winter storms having wrecked the notice-posts both here and at the main entrance. We crossed pleasant meadows to the modern village of Morte, then struck up by a very steep ascent to the main road close to the Castle Rock hotel, and could not help regretting that whoever had engineered this path in the interests of the public, seeing that it was one of the two main entrances to the Morte Point, had omitted steps to make it convenient for foot passengers.

So home to Woollacombe above a beach that had undergone a change in a few short hours. The blue water and the silver lines of breakers possessed the shore, and were foaming upon the black jagged rocks and the indented bays beneath us ; creatures in strange apparel—men and women —came bare-legged up the road from their sea-bath. This one like an Arab sheikh in his white burnous, that one like a mermaid fairy in a pantomime ; and still the sun showered its bounty on purple hedges of veronica and clouds dropped us purple shadows on to a rainbow sea. We

could not help remembering the words of our old friend on the Morte Point : "Taking it all in all, there ain't a better place in North Devon for folk as has nothing to do but to come and enjoy theirselves."

In the afternoon I returned to Morte to visit a possible cromlech of which guide-book writers and local historians seem blissfully ignorant, and of which I only heard by chance from a former resident. For future visitors it would be well to say that to find this cromlech one must pass by the little Morthoe cemetery, as before described, as if one were going to Morte Point. Turn in at the first black gate beyond it, pass along a path for twenty yards, then strike due north to the right and make for the ridge.

The cromlech will be found just over the ridge in full view of Bull Point. It is impossible to say by what power this huge stone was ever placed in position. It may surmount the little burial cairn in which some British or Viking chieftain was once buried, probably in a sitting posture ; but it is possible that the whole structure was once covered with earth, which centuries of storm have washed away, and the large stone which closed the burial cairn has long been dragged out of place and lies hard by. I said British or Viking, but remembering the home of the Norse-

man, and that this cromlech looks due north, it is not impossible that this records a Northern chieftain's place of sepulture. It is certainly one of the most interesting prehistoric monuments in North Devon, if it is a cromlech.

BARRAS HEADLAND AND THE OLD POST-OFFICE, TINTAGEL

WE had determined to visit the most southerly of our possessions on the western coast, Barras Headland, at Tintagel, fifteen acres of which were obtained from the Earl of Wharncliffe in 1897 for the sum of £502.

It was not much more than sixty miles as the crow flies, but railways in this part of Devon and Cornwall are not laid as the crow flies, and it meant a long inland journey to Yeoford, and then back by Okehampton to Launceston and Camelford. The exigencies of the war had lengthened the journey, and we knew that starting at nine o'clock in the morning we should not reach Tintagel till seven.

But the war was a blessing in disguise, for it enabled us to see an interesting little town *en route*, for we had to wait at Okehampton for four hours. We ran down the incline to Barnstaple, saw the estuary in full flood, and noted the bundles of Barnstaple baskets which crowded the platform. This basket-making, with certain

Barnstaple ware, are staple industries of the place in peace time. To-day the manufacture of aeroplanes, and the building of ferro-concrete barges overshadow them in importance. The country between Barnstaple and Yeoford consisted mainly of meadows covered with yellow iris, which passed up into rich arable land and pasturage.

After a considerable delay at Yeoford, we jogged on to Okehampton through rolling country of farm and orchard and got into conversation with a typical Devonshire farmer and his good wife, who in decent black were bound to Okehampton for the funeral of a friend who had met a tragic death at his own sheep-shearing. He had gone to superintend the supplying of oil to the engine used for the shearing machine, apparently had turned his back for a moment upon the flywheel, when by the wind of the wheel his coat was drawn in, and in a moment he was whirled from the ground and killed. The farm body had some strong things to say about the Food Controller. She had plenty of milk, but was not allowed to sell a pennyworth of it without a permit; plenty of butter, but little market for it owing to the rationing.

At Okehampton we saw below us the grey little town in the prettily wooded vale of the two Ock rivers, and descending for three-quarters of a mile to the main street we could not help

thinking that Charles Kingsley must either have had a much worse luncheon than we had at the "White Hart," or was suffering from toothache, when he described it as "an ugly dirty and stupid town, with which fallen man by some strange perversity has chosen to defile one of the loveliest sites in the pleasant land of Devon."

It is true that the picturesque buildings of old Devon do not here exist, but of the cleanliness of the town there can be no doubt. To-day it enjoys a picturesque recreation ground in the park, given to it by a Mr. Sydney Simmons, and no one who walks up to the parish church, or who visits the ruins of the Okehampton Castle, which have been very carefully excavated by the same public benefactor, but must feel that the Okehampton of to-day does not merit Kingsley's criticism.

We heard the funeral bell tolling at the little chapel of ease of St. James, at the end of the High Street, which has nothing of interest except its fourteenth-century tower, and talking with the bellringer learned that the custom of Okehampton when any person died was to ring five times, five as tellers both for men and women alike, and then to toll the age of the deceased.

The crowd of mourners grew as we walked with them up the steep pebbled pathway beneath the lime trees towards the church upon the height,

a church that was built in the middle of last century to replace the old church which had been burnt to the ground. We left the lime-tree shade and entered a remarkable beech avenue, which led for nearly a quarter of a mile straight up beneath high banks surmounted by the beech trees to the lych gate. There seemed to be nothing of great interest in the church, but the churchyard will ever be remembered as filled with the worst type of sepulchral monuments—such a contrast to the beautifully incised small headstones of date 1648 to 1690, which now do duty as paving stones of the churchyard path.

Presently, as we watched, the beech-tree avenue was filled with a dark crowd, and the hearse and mourning coaches, preceded by six Devonshire horsemen as outriders. I found afterwards that these were to be the "bearers" of the coffin, and that it was the custom hereabout to show respect by thus riding at the head of the procession. It certainly added considerable dignity to the sad cortège.

The view from the churchyard over the valley, with the great Oaklands wood beyond, was very striking. We descended the hill to visit the Castle, and were well repaid. Here, about half a mile from the town, in the exquisitely wooded valley of the West Ock, in a commanding position, was built before 1086 a castle which was

then held by Baldwin de Brionis, the sheriff. In the twelfth century domestic buildings were added to the great keep, and at the end of the thirteenth century the principal northern block, with its early English chapel, its lodge, its guard rooms, its refectory, and its kitchen, were probably erected. Passing through the barbican and mounting to the gate at the north-east, the whole plan of the later castle was apparent.

What interested us particularly was the preservation of the ovens *in situ* beyond the kitchen. The size of these ovens made us realize the number of mouths that the owner of a castle had to feed in mediæval days. We ascended thence to the northern keep, and obtained a fine view over the blue range of Exmoor to the north, and though the trees block the outlook to the south, we saw something of the beauty of the Ock Valley to the west.

The excavation has been done with great care, and with the aid of the admirable little plan to be obtained at the lodge it is possible to reconstruct the old home of the de Rivers and Courtenay families.

We crossed the stream and took a short cut to the station, and began our last stage of railway journey to Tintagel. This was full of interest, for we passed over very high ground, which gave us view on the one hand of the grey-green moor-

land that rose up to Dartmoor's highest ridge, and on the other hand of the rich plain that stretched away to the north, like a painted carpet broidered with the coming fruitage of the year, away to the deep blue distance of Exmoor. We saw St. Michael's church on Brent Tor, a lonely landmark to the south, but our eyes ever turned towards the north, and the landscape made us dream of the weald of Kent from One Tree Hill, or the blue distance of the Borderland as seen from Naworth.

Launceston was reached and Cornwall was won ; the brown, round tower of the ruined castle standing above us among the trees on the left hand. We passed on to Camelford with its associations, as some say, of that last great battle in the west, of which the chronicler writes : " Never was there a more dolefuller battle in no Christian land," where Arthur was mortally wounded, and all his knights save two were slain, for " ever they fought still till it was nigh night, and by that time was there a hundred thousand laid dead upon the down . . . ' Jesu, mercy,' said King Arthur, ' where are all my noble knights become, alas ! that I should ever see this doleful day, for now I am come unto mine end ! ' " With this romance in mind we started on our five miles' drive, at first over an uninteresting upland, then downhill by banks walled up to heaven, through

the debris of old slate quarries whose rocks, filled with furze and bracken, and beauty of their own. We left Trebarwith on our left, ascended a steep hill by picturesque cottages, and entered upon a rolling plain of corn and grass. We saw in the distance the old church of St. Materiana, which we knew was near our journey's goal, then entered that ancient village of Trevena, which would never have been called Tintagel but for the wish of the postal authorities, who apparently were quite unconscious that the word only applied to a single rock on the coast, and cared little about accuracy in matters of local topography.

We passed the Wharncliffe Arms, now closed, with the old preaching cross safely guarded on the green in front of the house, glad to think that so interesting a Christian monument of the ninth century should have been rescued from its use as a gate-post and here preserved. It stands about four feet high, and tells us by Romano-Gothic character in Latin that Aelnat made this cross for his soul, and on the obverse records the names of the four evangelists.

We drove by the old post-office, an ancient fourteenth-century building of very remarkable character, saw other crooked-roofed cottages that seemed to be of the same period, then entered

the modern world of New Tintagel, and in a few minutes arrived at the most romantically placed fortress-like hotel, that stands high-perched above the Barras Headland.

We went to rest that night with the sea on three sides of us, still gleaming from the long afterglow, and woke to find the whole land bathed in that glittering, dazzling sunshine which seems almost a peculiarity of the Cornish coast. Down to the Barras Headland we strolled, its short turf scorched by the sun where the rock came near the surface, but for the rest green with soft grass, enamelled with great patches of thyme such as I had never seen, and golden with anthyllis.

The Headland, owned by the Trust, may roughly be divided into three parts, a horn-shaped hill to the north-east covered with gorse, an extensive slope of grass which narrows to a depression, and then a rise to the naked rock which forms the end of the promontory. Its cliffs go sheer to the sea, and on the southern side form one horn of the far-famed Arthur's Cove, beneath Tintagel Castle.

That old miner, the sea, has hollowed this cliff into mighty caverns, from which, when tides are high, come bellowings unutterable, as if the rocks were groaning and travailing in pain. All view of the sea to the south is blocked by the Castle

rock, except just over the narrow isthmus between the mainland and the castle, where a glimpse of sapphire blue tells us how nearly the waters of Rocky Cove and Arthur's Cove meet.

Beyond the cove, on the landward side, is seen the steep roadway that leads up to the village inland ; a path from where we stand drops down to the cove. By the side of that path stands a stone, of grey Borrodale slate, which bears the following inscription :

THIS HEADLAND
THE PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL
TRUST FOR PLACES OF HISTORIC
INTEREST AND NATURAL BEAUTY
WAS PURCHASED IN 1896 BY PUBLIC
SUBSCRIPTION FOR THE USE AND
ENJOYMENT OF THE NATION.

" Hard by was great Tintagel's table round
And there of old the flower of Arthur's knights
Made fair beginning of a nobler time."

Those who descend that path must be impressed by the way in which the remains of the twelfth-century castle, with the keep high up upon the mainland, and the ruinous courtyard with gateway and battlemented walls on Arthur's rock opposite, grow up and strike the beholder with a sense of their absolute impregnability in olden time. For in that olden time there was probably nothing but a drawbridge, where now,

through fall of cliffs, is a narrow isthmus between the island rock and the mainland castle. It was called in Domesday Book the Castle of the Chain, i.e. drawbridge. Geoffrey of Monmouth, Bishop of St. Asaph in the year 1152, who wrote his romantic history of King Arthur, describes it thus: "It is situated upon the sea and on every side surrounded by it, and there is but one entrance into it, and that through a straight rock which three men shall be able to defend against the whole Power of the Kingdom." Leland, writing sixty years later, speaks of it as a "notable fortress and almost *situ loci inexpugnabile*." Sir Richard Grenville, when making his survey for Queen Elizabeth at the time of the Armada, tells us that the "drawbridge which had been in existence in living memory was now gone by reason that the seas have undermined and fretted out some part of the works whereon the bridge stood." He tells us that in his time it was a "ruinat place, though capable of repair," and from a little print, now in the British Museum, by Norden, of about the year 1600, it is plain that at this time the great gateway on the mainland, the keep, and lower court were more or less entire.

The "fretting of the sea," spoken of by Sir Richard Grenville, goes on apace. It was only two years ago that a small landslip occurred on

the Castle rock immediately above the cavern at the cove, and discovered a British burial-place, with cinerary pottery and fragments of bones and remains of what seemed to be an oaken coffin. It is certain that such burial would not have taken place so near the edge of the cliff, and so proves that since British times portions of the cliff have been washed away.

To-day the cove is filled with merry children gathering in the spoils of war. Five weeks ago a French ship, laden with a Spanish cargo, was submarined off the bay, and every tide brings in, among its flotsam and jetsam, oranges and onions, Barcelona nuts and walnuts—these latter, though the salt water has robbed them of their lustre, are treasure-trove for the children.

We re-ascend Barras Headland and gain a view of coast line in the north. The black rocks named "The Sisters," in the near foreground, seem only one rock from this point of view, and stand up off the near promontory of Willa Park. Beyond is Bossiney Head and the pyramidal mass of Long Island. Short Island lies beyond it, and farther again is seen the Meachard Rock and Boscastle. Then the eye follows the long stretch of mainland to Hartland Point. The time to see this view is late evening, when the island rocks off the coast shine out separate and clear, and seem like great ships of stone moored off their rocky harbourage.

It is worth while to descend to the little stream and pass through the gorse to the north-easterly knoll, as from that point there is a fair view of the National Trust possession. And what a possession it is for the people who come here for rest and the salt sea air and sunshine! For we are really on enchanted ground. Below us lies the cove where Merlin and Bleys, the two magicians, paced the shore on that stormy night when Uther Pendragon died in his castle-hold, with lamentation that he was heirless. There, as Tennyson has sung for us, upon the waters they saw—

"a ship, the shape thereof
A dragon wing'd, and all from stem to stern
Bright with a shining people on the decks
And gone as soon as seen. And then the two
Dropt to the cove and watch'd the great sea fall
Wave after wave, each mightier than the last,
Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the deep
And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged
Roaring, and all the wave was in a flame:
And down the wave, and in the flame was borne
A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet
Who stoop't and caught the babe and cried, "The King!
Here is an heir for Uther!"

Whether at Dozmare Pool beneath Row Tor, four miles to the east of Camelford, as some say, or whether in some pool nearer the sea Sir Bedivere flung Excalibur at the third bidding

of the King, who was feeling his wound grow cold, we know not. Malory tells us Sir Bedivere "bound the gyrdyl about the hyltes and then he threw the swerde as farre into the water as he myght, and there came an arme and an hande aboue the water and mette it, and caught it and so shoke it thryse and braundysshed, and then vanysshed awaye the hande wyth the swerde in the water. So syr Bedivere came ageyn to the Kyng and tolde hym what he sawe. 'Alas,' sayd the Kyng, 'helpe me hens for I drede me I have taryed ouer longe.' Than syr Bedivere toke the Kyng upon his backe and so wente wyth hym to that water syde."

Where was that "water syde?" He was bound for the island valley of Avilion, where he would heal him of his grievous wound. Up channel as far as Bridgwater he must needs be borne. Is it not allowable to suppose that, from this cove that saw his miraculous birth, beneath the Castle rock that nursed him to manhood and kinghood, he who came "from out the boundless deep" should turn again home? Wherever the scene is laid let Tennyson tell the story.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black stoled, black hooded, like a dream—by these

Three Queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes
Or hath come since the making of the world.
Then murmured Arthur, " Place me in the barge,"
And to the barge they came. Then those three Queens
Put forth their hands and took the King and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood ; for all his face was white
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east ;

. . . . .

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere
" Ah my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go ?

. . . . .

For now I see the true old times are dead
When every morning brought a noble chance
And every chance brought out a noble knight.

. . . . .

And I the last go forth companionless
And the days darken round me, and the years
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."
And slowly answered Arthur from the barge
" The old order changeth, yielding place to new
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure! but thou
If thou shouldst never see my face again
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain
If knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friends?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
To the island valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."
So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, as some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs . . ."

It is quite true that not a single stone of the ruined castle, either on the mainland or island, dates back beyond the twelfth century, but it was so noted a stronghold that Richard, Earl of Cornwall, could in 1245 give asylum here to his

nephew David, Prince of Wales, then in rebellion against the King ; and at a later time John de Northampton, who, it is said, has left behind him the altar stone in the ruined chapel worked with his own hands, was imprisoned here for life in 1385 for his unruly mayoralty. Later still Thomas, Earl of Warwick, in 1397, was a prisoner here : but all these facts run risk of being forgotten in the romance of that much earlier Arthurian time. Nevertheless, we are free to reconstruct the stately castle building and the island chapel of St. Juliot, in which, as late as the end of the fourteenth century, with some magnificence and ritual, worship was maintained. That this was so we know from a warrant, issued by Richard II in 1388 to John Slegh, the King's butler, keeper of the King's Castle at Tintagel, " for the price of vestments of a rich silk of a red and blue colour, consisting of a chesable, two albs, two scarfs, two maniples, two frontlets, to wit one with the images of the Blessed Mary and St John, and one a covering for the body, one pulpit cloth, and two curtains valued at ten marks." And we know that in 1483 Richard III appointed John Leicroft chaplain of his free chapel of Dyndagell.

We can see, as we look across from Barras Headland, the same sea gate in the wall which Sir Richard Grenville described to Elizabeth,

standing above the landing place where he said that four or five "of the greatest sort of ships may with most windes ride, and land anie companie of men."

But all these things pass away from us, as of minor interest, when we go back in thought to those British times when the inhabitants hereabout dwelt in their barrows at Willa Park, at Bossiney, at Trevale Bury, Titchbarrow, and Cundaldon-barrow, and owned King Arthur as their lord. As we look up to the little white path that leads to what was once the bridge, between the island and the mainland, we may see Uther Pendragon and Merlin pass up to Gaulois' castle hold. We may think of Gaulois' widowed Queen, Ingraine, so misled by enchantment as to "believe Uther was her liege lord"; we may dream of Arthur's upbringing on this seabound rock by the gentle Ector, of the meeting of the knights in after years about the round table, of Tristram's shameful wooing of Iseult the Queen, of Merlin's death and burial outside the chapel walls, "in a rich sepulchre," shown by an old priest to Lancelot and Gawaine, who tells them, "In this sepulchre was placed the body of Merlin, but never might it be set inside the chapel, wherefore perforce it remaineth outside, and know of very truth that the body lieth not within the sepulchre, for as soon as it was set therein it was taken out and snatched away."

And wandering on his rocky island home, we think of Arthur, filling his boyish hands with the same thrift and white bladder-campion we ourselves gather to-day, may feel the great sea with its restlessness, appeal to the restless spirit in the boy for far adventure. For him, as for us, the lark sang, and the seabirds, like souls in pain, cried about the rocks below. For him, as for us, the sunset made a path of gold upon the grey waters to the west, and the golden galleons of evening cloud called his soul to worlds beyond.

Entering the little chapel we can believe that here, in some earlier building, Arthur knelt in prayer, and visiting the well of water, crystal clear, on the southern side of the headland, ever rising from some far inland source up in the rock, may drink of the water that perhaps gave comfort to the parched lips of the wounded King, and thank God that another well of water, springing up to Eternal Life, rose through the Spiritual Rock to give his knightly soul daily refreshment and strength for the work of his hands and heart.

But Arthur has never left his island home. As we gaze, a chough flies by to his haunt upon the cliff edge, and Arthur, so the fishermen hereabout fable, has come again.

It is an interesting village, this old village of Trevena that in old days was probably the

nurseling of the ancient borough of Bossiney, which boasts a charter from the time of Richard, Duke of Cornwall, and which had for its few farmsteads the right to return two members of Parliament, till the Reform Act was passed. At one time it boasted Sir Francis Drake as its representative, and elected mayors from 1551 to 1832 with mayoral seal and mace, which still exist. But the village probably grew up beneath the shelter of the twelfth-century castle, and the Norman church, with its stone altar bearing consecration crosses upon it, and its very interesting font. A Roman milestone, within the church, strikes a note of pre-Norman times. The church stands in lonely dignity upon the cliff, a sea-mark for many miles, and is dedicated to St. Materiana or St. Madryn, which suggest a pre-Norman consecration ; and, Celtic perhaps in origin, it takes us back to mediæval days by reason of the remains of a stone bench round the south transept where the old people sat while the young people stood during worship.

Here and there in the village are a few of the old Cornish houses of early times, with their hummocked roofs, their pleasant porches, and every available crevice giving root-hold to stonecrop or valerian. But whether old or modern, the cottage of Trevena is made delightful by its tiny wall-enclosed garden plot, green with

turf and gay with flowers. The most interesting building in the village is the fourteenth-century manor house, formerly the post-office, which stands almost opposite the present post-office. It attracts attention at once by the extreme beauty of light and shade upon its uneven roof of grey-green slates, tufted with golden saxifrage and moss. Its front is broken by an ample porch, a hooded window and projecting gable, and on the left of the main porch, by the lean-to roof which shelters the oven.

We enter the little forecourt garden, gay with valerian and flowering mallow, and see through the house to a little garden paradise beyond, a blaze of rose-red valerian to-day. We are welcomed by a grey-eyed old Cornish body, who graciously tells us that the owner of the cottage, a Miss Johns, will be very glad if we care to walk through it. "You can go upstairs and downstairs, or wherever you will, and you had better step this way to the bedroom."

It was furnished very simply, with good old cottage furniture, and going upstairs to a second bedroom we found a four-post bed, and from the stairway were able to look into the main living-room of the house which was open from floor to roof, with a gallery over one end of it. We came down and passed through this main room to a quaint kitchen beyond, from which

OLD POST-OFFICE, TINTAGEL.

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a stone staircase leads to the bedroom above, noting the tiny windows to allow of light in out-of-the-way corners, and noting also the old-fashioned ingle and huge oven by its side. We realized then that this cottage, as it is called, was probably the house of a gentleman, who entertained many friends, and served much baked meats in his refectory. He too, like the Norman Vicar of old at this church, seems to have known the worth of pigeon-pie. Still in the vicarage garden stands the old Norman dovecote, and here in this fourteenth-century house is the pigeon loft of ancient time.

The old housekeeper loved every stick and stone in the place, and spoke of the cottage as of a living thing. "Of course, she be a bit draughty at times, and she makes a deal of dirt from old rafters and what not, and sometimes I say windows should be bigger, but she be a great favourite with the visitors, and them as comes to lodge here in the summer can't say too much about her."

The property, which has belonged to the National Trust since 1903, subject to the life-interest of Miss Johns, would probably not now be in existence but for her love of old Cornish days. She heard that it was to be sold, to be pulled down for the site of a modern building, and begging the Earl of Wharncliffe's agent

not to bid against her she went to the sale. He, a wise man in his generation, refused to give a fancy price for a semi-ruinous building, and Miss Johns thus became the possessor in 1893. Unable to put it in repair, she called in the help of the National Trust, who secured the advice of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, and a well-known architect, Detmar Blow, who with knowledge and skill put the cottage in substantial repair, and preserved for us its original features, and there is no reason now why the cottage should not stand a monument of fourteenth-century architecture to delight beholders for many generations.

But the interest of a stay at Tintagel does not consist only in National Trust property and the Arthurian legend. We sojourn here among a grey-eyed, well-mannered and kindly people by the seaside, entirely unspoiled by the paraphernalia of an ordinary watering-place. Every road that leads from the village takes you at easy distance to some remains of the old British kingdom of Lyonesse, or to some remembrance of early Celtic Christianity.

Thus, for example, we may visit within a mile the famous circular earthwork at Bossiney, where it is fabled that on midsummer eve Arthur's round table rises from beneath the ground, and is seen for a moment bright as moonlight, while Arthur's

knights in ghostly guise pass round it. We may go to Trevethy farm beyond St. Nectan's glen, and after visiting the holy well of St. Piran, may ask for the key of the waterfall in the wooded vale hard by, and passing down a lane enter the enchanting woodland and walk for the best part of a mile through dappled shadow and sun, the stream singing beside us of old Arthurian times, till we come to a little thatched house of rest, and putting key to door, which gives access to what might be expected to be the garden of the house, find a continuation of the path we came by taking us by zigzag routes to the bottom of St. Nectan's Kieve. The waterfall comes flashing out of cavern darkness from rocks high above us, falls into a basin and flashes again out from beneath an arch of rock into the smooth pool at our feet. Here, so local tradition has it, King Arthur watched his knights kneel, bathe their brows in the cool water, and swear allegiance to the Quest of the San Grail. Accustomed as we are to the crystal mountain streams of the north, it was a disappointment to find how turbid this water was.

This muddiness may have been only temporary, for I found many cattle above the fall, knee-deep in water. Certainly in no more romantic woodland sanctuary could Arthur have bade farewell to his knights.

But a later memory makes this holy ground, for here, it is said, St. Nectan used to pray in a little chapel above the fall, and call his neighbours together to worship, by means of a silver bell, which sounded far out to sea. Feeling death coming upon him, he removed the bell and cast it into a cleft in the rock, and because he had so wished it his friends turned aside the torrent and buried his body, bell and all, in a rocky tomb behind the waterfall. It is a pity that his name has been so maltreated by local parlance. To-day, if one asked the way to St. Nectan's Cove the villager would stare, but if you demand to know the way to St. Knighton's Kieve, he would direct you thither at once.

To future visitors it is worth while to say that for a lack of proper direction they may easily miss the way to the waterfall. The door which gives access to the only path which leads down to it, seems to be a door into a garden of a little rest house high up above the fall. There is no notice to tell you that this is the door which gives admittance, and it is quite easy to pass it and wander on fruitlessly up the valley. But whether the waterfall is won or not, to all who are a little tired of the treelessness of the coast, there is an added joy in being able to walk for a mile or more, through such perfect woodland beauty as may be found in the vale of rocks, or St. Nectan's glen.

The roadsides themselves are a continual joy to lovers of wild-flower life. The walls, built herring-bone fashion, allow of easy growth of the pink stonecrop and golden saxifrage ; hart's tongue ferns cluster at their shady bases, blue scabious, rose-coloured campions and foxgloves shine out against grey lichen ; and the thrift, especially on the seaward walls, has for generations become so luxuriant that it falls over in billowy beauty, a wonder to behold ; while the hedgerows are fragrant with bedstraw, honeysuckle, and wild roses.

As lovers of wild-bird life, we have but to take our stand on the Barras Headland and listen to the sharp, shrill cry of the clough, or watch the falcon swoop on his prey ; while if we take a walk for a mile to the north, by Gullaston Cove to the Willapark Headland, we can sit by the hour and watch the seafowl on "The Sisters" and Lye Rock, and listen to the laughter, the mewing, and the barking of the gulls as they return home from their seafaring labours. Down below, skimming the waters like spirits that cannot rest, the sea-swallows silently pass to and fro. Cormorants are black upon the white ledges above high-water mark, and the gulls star the rough grasses where they make their nests. There is silence, and a huge, grey-backed gull comes floating in, and hated by the whole gull

colony, the great rock suddenly finds multitudinous voice of protest. He fares out seaward, and such a chuckling and laughter takes place, that you might imagine the gull colony had a grim sense of humour and delighted in the rebuff he had received.

I made special inquiry about the Cornish chough, and found that though diminished in numbers he still clings to his Arthurian haunts; and long may he continue to do so, for none of his race is so graceful in shape, so shy of manner, so delicate in form, and so swift of flight.

We miss the warblers, but the bramblings are all about us and the song of the lark fills the air. But it is not only birds and wild fowl that add an interest to our stay. For larger winged things, and mightier birds of prey, pass and repass all day, and the drone of the biplane and the hum of the airship seem never silent. Far in the distance a white speck grows into what seems a huge flying fish, and as it nears us with its great eyes and silver scales, we know that it is questing for the enemy submarines, and sending messages of cheer or warning to the steamers that pass below. So admirable has been the patrol on this sector of coast that for a whole month no submarine has fired a shot, and it seems probable that Admiral Jellicoe's prophecy may turn out to be correct, that by August of 1918 the submarine menace will have been foiled.

The fortress-castle hotel on the cliff above Barras Headland gives one wide prospect of a sea of ever-changing colour with the certainty of marvellous dawns and sunsets, and whether at eventide, on a cloudy day, the sun suddenly reappears in a flood of light and builds a golden wall in the west for a few moments before it sets, or breaking through the misty veil of the horizon lays a royal pavement of gold from the far distance to the shore ; or on a clear day, collecting all its fire into itself, seems to move towards the land, a rosy ball in front of a purple bar of mist, and floating forward, still a perfect orb of fire, plunges beneath the waters leaving in the clear heaven on either side of it the great wings of the night upon a sleeping sea—we feel that, however glorious the day has been, more glorious is the night.

Last, but not least, the guest finds in his host a man whose ancestors have known the land for centuries. Two of them were mayors of Bossiney in the seventeenth century. A man, steeped in Arthurian lore, and caring for the traditions of the place, one too who has not only stocked his hotel with books, but has a good private library of his own, which he is courteously willing to share with those of his visitors who care for such things.

APPENDIX

We add as an appendix the interesting report of the architect, Mr. Detmar Blow, who was responsible for the work of repair of the old post-office at Tintagel.

The ancient Manor House, known as the Old Post-Office, at Tintagel, North Cornwall, stands on the south-east side of the village street, on a small green of its own, about half-way between the roads leading to Camelford and King Arthur's Castle. It has of recent years been known as the Old Post-Office, during a time that such business was conducted there. It is a building without doubt in the style of the fourteenth century, as can be seen by the workmanship of the wooden doorway leading to the old kitchen, the entrance porch, and shaping of the main roof covering the hall and its adjoining two rooms; but Cornwall held to its traditions longer than many other counties, and it is impossible to ascribe a particular date during the fourteenth century to its building, in the absence of documents; nevertheless it is itself the best written record that can be found of its own particular date, and of the progress and manner of life of the people, and by the upholding of such records the history of our old national life can be preserved. For this reason no attempt has been made, while repairing the building, to replace ancient features with modern copies, but to preserve the building as it stood. The historic architectural value lies not in the stone itself, of which plenty can

be found as old at the quarry, but in the particular shaping and cutting at a given period. The larger windows, now of wood, would all have been stone mullioned windows at first, similar to the one still remaining in the gable of the front wall, and the smaller openings cut out of a single stone, such as still exist in the hall and ancient kitchen, which was lighted by four such small apertures, two in either wall ; since then some of the window openings had been enlarged, and at the time of this repair the stonework round the wood casements and sashes showed no traces of what formerly existed in material, shape, or size. In repairing, the sashes were altered for casements for the simple convenience of opening.

The plan is that of a fourteenth-century manor house—not large, but a commodious building. Built principally of stone, entered from the green through a porch, on either side of which is a stone bench, a large hall in the centre, open to the roof, is screened from the outer doorways by a low wall forming a passage way between hall and kitchen. The floors slope in the direction of the hard rock foundation, on which are laid the slate stones of various shapes. The jambs on either side of the hall hearth-fire rise narrow and high, boldly shaped, supporting a large stone overmantel, some eight feet long by four high. None of the original doors remains, but a fine original door-frame, to which the door was hung, leads into the ancient kitchen. For a country where wood was scarce and valuable the oak timbers of the roof are large and strong, and over the hall, black with the smoke of ages, at about every 10 feet an elegant truss supports the rafters. Without the upper end of the hall is the ladies' retiring-room, from which the stone turret stair leads to a bedroom above.

The porch at this end of the house is a later addition, and for the present convenience of the housekeeper taking care of the building, who now occupies this end of it, the small doorway was made into an adjoining scullery, formerly a beast hovel. The hall had of late years been divided by a floor some 7 feet above the ground for a bedroom above, but this was of such unsound and temporary construction as to necessitate its removal, which opened the hall to the roof as of old. The small stairway in the ancient kitchen is also a later insertion to a bedroom above, which probably did not originally exist. It has, however, been retained in the present repairs for the extra accommodation of visitors, who contribute to maintain while inhabiting the house; the small fire-place in this room has been now added.

During the recent repairs the roof slating and east gable wall, which were in a dangerous condition, were made sound. The construction of the roof sends considerable thrust on to the walls, and two new buttresses had to be built against the back wall, where it bulged out. An adjoining hovel has been made useful as an extra bedroom to avoid additions. No change has been made in the shape of the building or outline of the roof. The new door latches were made by Fletcher Glanville, blacksmith of Bossiney; the masonry repairs by Samuel John Lang, of Tintagel; the dry walling by Jewel, of Trevalga; the carpenter work by Thomas Brown and his sons, of Trevalga; and a well, sunk 40 feet deep, by Chillclott and Bray, of Bossiney, all under the direction of Detmar Blow, at a cost of £300.

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